

# THE AMERICAN TEACHER

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# The Teachers Union in Action

## New AFT Locals

No. 666, Anderson School Principals' Club, Anderson, Ind.

No. 667, WPA Adult Educational Teachers' Union, Newark, N. J.

No. 668, Kanawha County Vocational Teachers' Union, Charleston, W. Va.

No. 669, Hibbing Teachers' Federation, Hibbing, Minn.

No. 670, Meadville Federation of Teachers, Crawford County, Pa.

**437** TRENTON, N. J.—The full increments to which they are entitled under the Trenton schools' salary schedule will be paid to the group of local teachers who refused to accept illegal pay cuts in 1937-38, according to the ruling handed down November 2 by the State Board of Education. The decision reversed the finding of Charles H. Elliot, State Commissioner of Education, who had upheld the Trenton School Board in penalizing teachers who had successfully sued for back pay.

In 1937-38 the Trenton Board of Education decreased all salaries 15 per cent, although the permissive statute had lapsed, making such deduction illegal. A group of teachers carried the issue to the Supreme Court and won, but all except seventeen union members accepted a compromise involving voluntary cuts with subsequent increments as compensation. The seventeen who insisted upon their contractual rights were denied increments. They then appealed to the State Commissioner of Education, who sustained the Trenton Board.

In reversing Commissioner Elliot, the State Board of Education found in part:

"The teacher who has acquired tenure has rights peculiar to her status. She cannot thereafter be dismissed from her position, except for inefficiency, incapacity, conduct unbecoming a teacher or other just cause, nor can her salary be reduced except for like reasons. Her salary may be increased and when such increase becomes effective, it is protected as was the original salary. . . .

"The quoted provisions of the salary schedule of the respondent appear to be self-operative. The teachers who have served the requisite period become entitled to the stated increments as of course. The schedule distinguishes between increases in salary and the annual

increments, and it is the former which are granted only upon the recommendation of the superintendent of schools and order of the board. There would seem to be no purpose served in adopting a salary schedule if the provisions thereof can be operative only on annual recommendation and action by the board of education. *So long as the schedule remains in force, without amendments, the increments vest in the teachers entitled thereto as therein provided.*"

The decision came after the Mercer Central Labor Union and the Trenton City Commission had passed resolutions endorsing the teachers' stand for their rights and censuring the local school board for its apparent discrimination.

The Trenton Board of Education has announced that it will appeal the decision to the Supreme Court. J. Eisenberg, teachers' attorney, said he was confident that on the basis of precedents the high court would not only sustain the contention of the State Board and the teachers, but would set forth even more clearly the vested rights of tenure teachers.

\* \* \*

**31** SACRAMENTO, CALIF.—An important achievement of Local 31 is the successful conclusion of a campaign for sabbatical leave for teachers of Sacramento. For a number of years there has been in California a state law

permitting a teacher on sabbatical leave to receive the difference between substitute's salary and his own salary, but to make this law operate within a school district action is required by the governing board of the district. It seems likely that all Sacramento teachers who will wish to take advantage of this plan will have the opportunity to do so.

Local 31 is honored in having elected to the State Senate John Harold Swain, one of its past-presidents, in what has been described as the most notable victory of the year in California. As an aftermath of the election, some of the opposition have started a movement to disbar public-school teachers from holding office. At present there seems little likelihood that this movement will succeed.

\* \* \*

**223** MADISON, WIS.—The University of Wisconsin Local voted unanimously to address the following letter to the President of the University in an effort to assure protection of seniority rights, tenure, and re-employment to teachers and research workers who may be drafted. Union President Harold Groves was authorized to discuss similar safeguards for the employment rights of non-instructional employees with Roy Kubista, executive secretary of the Wisconsin State Em-

(Continued on page 30)

## Notice to Officers of All Locals

YOUR ATTENTION is called to ARTICLE VIII, Section 7 of the Constitution which provides:

"Any affiliated local not paying its per capita tax on or before the fifteenth of each month shall be notified of the fact by the Secretary-Treasurer, and if at the end of three months it is still in arrears, it shall become suspended from membership in this organization, and can be reinstated only by a majority vote of the Executive Council, or by a convention, upon payment of arrears in full."

It has been the established practice of the Executive Council and the National Office not to enforce this rule rigidly, but to consider the section as enabling legislation. However, the Executive Council, at its meeting in Chicago, December 27 to January 2, voted to enforce this section of the constitution in a literal manner. Pursuant to this action no local which is in arrears for a period of more than three (3) months can be restored to good standing except by a vote of the Executive Council. Local officers are urged, therefore, carefully to watch the financial standing of the local and to send in per capita payments promptly.

Hereafter, when a local in bad standing sends in a per capita payment, it will be necessary to secure a majority vote of the Executive Council before the local can be listed in good standing. Until such majority vote is secured, the local will not be entitled to participate in the official business of the Union.

IRVIN R. KUENZLI.

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## Two Statements by the National Executive Council of the AFT

### *Rapp-Coudert Committee Condemned by National Union*

THE RAPP-COUDERT Committee, in investigating many aspects of the New York schools, seems to us to have violated basic principles of trade unionism and individual rights.

In opening the investigation by inquiring into the affairs of a local of the American Federation of Teachers, the result has been to frighten teachers away from continued union membership and to throw in question the right of teachers to belong to a union. It not only constitutes a threat to the Teachers' Union, but offers a dangerous precedent in the case of other labor organizations, and other trade unions share our apprehension of this precedent. This fear on the part of individual teachers has been created because the Committee has failed to protect many individuals who were subpoenaed to give testimony. Private hearings have been called before a

one-man committee where teachers have been denied the right to bring counsel or witnesses or to receive a transcript of testimony. Persons charged with subversive activities on unsubstantiated testimony have been denied the right to reply to charges. Finally, in addition to the violation of these individual rights, there has been the demand on the part of the Committee for the membership lists of AFT Local 5. While no local of the AFT or any other union should have any action to hide, nevertheless, as the right of individuals to belong to a trade union is not thoroughly established in fact, and reprisals can be taken against union members by unfriendly superiors, every union has the obligation to protect its members from possible discrimination or attack.

Local 5 has submitted its minutes and financial records over a number of years to the Committee, but is defending in the courts its right to keep its membership lists confidential.

We, the Executive Council of the American Federation of Teachers, protest such methods of conducting an investigation and urge the legislature of New York



so to regulate the procedure of this or any other investigating committee as to give witnesses before it at least the constitutional protection they would have in courts of law, and further to regulate the procedure so that legally constituted trade unions shall not have their existence threatened by extraordinary demands such as the handing over of membership lists. These methods only serve the purpose of exposing individual members to discrimination and reprisal.

Because we believe in free education as basic to the defense of democracy, the American Federation of Teachers has traditionally stood for expansion of educational services in contrast to organizations which have sought to economize at the expense of free public education. We have campaigned in most state legislatures and in the federal congress for increased support for education to advance the standards of the schools, increase necessary services to the children, provide adequate professional compensation for teachers, decrease class size, provide free textbooks, raise the compulsory school age, and extend education to include city colleges and adult education.

This is not to say that we do not recognize the present emergency. Teachers, like all patriotic citizens, are prepared to share in necessary sacrifices. However, in view of rising production and increase in the total national income, it seems peculiarly indefensible to initiate at this time such an investigation as has been set up in New York through the Rapp-Coudert Committee which has recommended decreased state aid to New York schools. We particularly deplore the Committee's preparing the way for such a cut by coupling an investigation of finance with an inquiry into subversive activities and thus appearing to cast suspicion on education generally. These methods do not serve the interests of education but play into the hands of its enemies, who do not hesitate to jeopardize the educational opportunities of the children and the ultimate welfare of the nation in the name of economy.

The public schools owe their existence and financial support to legislative action. However, educators and parents have long endeavored to lift the public schools out of the controversial field of politics and establish both teaching and education on a plane of high professional standards and accomplishments. This is essential to sound democratic education.

The Executive Council of the American Federation of Teachers realizes that high professional standards can be maintained and approved only if they are constantly examined and evaluated, but calls attention to the serious dangers involved in delegating authority for such examinations and evaluations to specially constituted investigating committees set up by state legislatures. We fully recognize the tremendous service which many legislative investigating committees have rendered the public by throwing the light of official investigation on such dark areas as the violation of labor's liberties revealed by the Lafollette Committee or the war mongering of munitions-

makers uncovered by the Nye Committee.

Where graft or political corruption has entered the school system a political investigation may serve to uncover it, but where the investigation moves into quality of school services in which professional standards of teaching and administration should obtain we would urge the establishment of professionally constituted surveys, and would prefer to put our support and trust in government agencies already established and committed to the handling of such matters. In making such a statement we as teachers accept our responsibility for vigorous self-discipline and for the constant measuring of our work against the high standards which the education of the youth of our democracy requires. In view of the fact that a costly inquiry into the schools of the state has recently been conducted under the auspices of the Board of Regents, we believe that the continuation of the Rapp-Coudert Committee will serve no useful purpose.

### **Report of the Council Acting As a Committee of the Whole On the Investigation of Local 5**

THE EXECUTIVE Council of the American Federation of Teachers, having convened at Chicago, Illinois, pursuant to call and notice, and pursuant to Article IX, Section 11 of the Constitution, on the twenty-seventh day of December, 1940, and having, during the course of the proceedings, heard and received certain reports concerning the affairs of the Teachers' Union of New York, New York, being Local 5 of the American Federation of Teachers, and hereafter sometimes called Local 5; and

The Executive Council, having on the twenty-ninth day of December, 1940, by a unanimous vote of the Council, resolved to investigate said Local 5 for conduct not in harmony with the principles of the American Federation of Teachers, and tending to bring the American Federation of Teachers into disrepute; and

The Executive Council, having on the thirty-first day of December, 1940, resolved itself into a committee of the whole to conduct the investigation so resolved upon; and

The Executive Council having directed the Secretary-Treasurer to request Charles J. Hendley, president of Local 5, and Dale Zysman, vice president of Local 5, to appear before the Executive Council to be examined touching matters pertinent to the investigation, and they having been so requested, and having appeared before the Executive Council, represented by Ben Meyers, as their counsel, and accompanied by Robert K. Speer, president of Local 537 of the American Federation of Teachers, and made statements to the Council and having submitted to examination on questions touching the subject of the investigation; and

The Executive Council sitting as a committee of the whole, having heard and received further oral and docu-



mentary evidence upon the conduct of Local 5, and having given careful consideration to the same, and being now advised on the matters and things involved in the investigation, it is therefore the opinion of the Executive Council sitting as a committee of the whole:

(1) That officials of said Local 5 have promulgated and promoted dual unionism by assisting in the organizing of a local union of the custodial workers of the Board of Education and Higher Education of New York City, an affiliate of the State, County and Municipal Workers of America of the CIO, when a local union of the American Federation of Labor was in existence, having jurisdiction over the same employees.

(2) That said Local 5, at the same time it was disrupting the national organization by accusing the Executive Council of considering a dual union, has been engaged in dual unionism by violating the jurisdiction of Local 24 of the American Federation of Teachers, the same having jurisdiction over vocational teachers of New York City, by accepting vocational teachers to membership in Local 5.

(3) That the internal affairs of the said Local 5 have been so conducted as to bring disharmony to the membership and that factionalism within the local has resulted in loss of membership through nonpayment of dues and by resignations which have stopped the growth of Local 5 and make it unlikely that said local can effect a satisfactory organization of the Teachers of New York City.

(4) That said Local 5 has disrupted the work of the national organization and of the several locals thereof in the period following the 1940 convention of the American Federation of Teachers up to the present meeting of the Executive Council by sending out a large number of general communications to the officers of the several locals and to the Executive Council, which communications have attacked the Executive Council and a subcommittee thereof on the basis of rumors and suspicions not grounded in fact and which have tended to create an atmosphere of hysteria throughout the membership of the American Federation of Teachers.

(5) That publicity coming from the political and other activities of said Local 5 has resulted in loss of membership throughout the national organization and tends to bring the American Federation of Teachers into disrepute.

(6) That said Local 5 has been expelled from the Joint Committee of Teachers Organizations, with which it had long been associated, and has thereby, and by virtue of the causes of its expulsion, tended to bring the American Federation of Teachers into disrepute.

(7) That political and other activities of Local 5 and factions thereof extending over a long period of time caused an investigation by a committee of the American Federation of Labor in 1935 and 1936, which resulted in adoption by the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor of a recommendation to the American Federation of Teachers that the charter of Local 5 be revoked.

(8) That delegates of said Local 5 have been suspended from the Central Trades and Labor Council of Greater New York and Vicinity, said suspension having occurred in March of 1938; and that efforts of said Local 5 and of officers and committees of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Teachers to secure reinstatement in said body have been unavailing; and further that the President of the American Federation of Labor has stated that in his opinion the action taken by the Central Trades and Labor Council of Greater New York and Vicinity in suspending the delegates of Local 5 was fully justified because of the conduct of this local, and that it is his opinion that Local 5 cannot as now constituted become affiliated with the said Central Trades and Labor Council.

(9) That the leadership of said Local 5 has engaged in certain organized tactics and practices inimical to democracy.

It is therefore hereby resolved that the findings made by the Executive Council sitting as a committee of the whole be adopted as the findings of the Executive Council, and the Executive Council further hereby finds that Local 5 is guilty of conduct not in harmony with the principles of the American Federation of Teachers and tending to bring the American Federation of Teachers into disrepute, and the Executive Council further hereby finds that the existence of Local 5 is detrimental to the development of democracy in education.

It is further resolved that the charter of Local 5 ought to be revoked for conduct not in harmony with the principles of the American Federation of Teachers and tending to bring the American Federation of Teachers into disrepute because its existence is detrimental to the development of democracy in education.

It is further resolved that Local 5 be notified to show cause, if any it have, why its charter should not be revoked, that within five days it be sent a copy of these resolutions, that within fourteen days it be sent a stenographic report of the evidence considered by the Executive Council in its investigation and be further notified that it may within twenty days after receiving the stenographic report submit briefs by mailing copies thereof to each of the members of the Executive Council; and be further notified to file with the Secretary-Treasurer within five days of receipt hereof the original or photostatic copies thereof of authority given Local 5 of making reduced per capita payments for substitutes and delinquent members, as the Executive Council may desire to go further into the financial relations of Local 5 with the American Federation of Teachers; and be it further notified that authorized representatives of Local 5 may appear at a meeting of the Executive Council to be held in Chicago, Illinois, on the fifteenth day of February, 1941, for the purpose of hearing Local 5 in the matters involved, upon giving ten days' notice to the Secretary-Treasurer of their intention to appear. The Executive Council reserves the right further to investigate Local 5 if it desires.

# *The Secretary-Treasurer's Page*

## **Labor's Gifts to Education**

NOW THAT the festivals of Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day have passed and we have settled down to the serious task of initiating our local, state, and national programs of action for the new year, it is a fitting time to re-evaluate our motives and thankfully to contemplate the many services which labor, over the years, has rendered to education in America. Fully appreciative of the contribution organized workers have made to American democracy through implementation of public education, let us enter upon the program of the new year with a firm determination that the work we are doing is decidedly worthwhile.

Let us, as teachers, be thankful for those early men of labor who originated the free school system of America by demanding, as a plank in the platform of the first labor convention in America, that there should be free schools for rich and poor, supported by general taxation. Stoned in the streets of Philadelphia for advocating such radicalism as free public schools, these patriotic workmen persisted in an ideal which later became a fundamental principle of democratic government.

Let us be thankful for the significant part organized labor has played in taking literally millions of children from wretched lives in sweatshops and placing them in public schools where children of a democracy should be.

Let us be deeply thankful to organized labor for giving the national government a Department of Labor—the only department of government devoted entirely to human welfare—which provides aid for crippled children, aid for the blind, care of dependent widows and orphans, better housing, safety and health in industry, better parental care for children, social security, and better homes in general by providing higher standards of living.

Let us be thankful for the extension of educational opportunities to millions of young people through federal funds for vocational education provided by the Smith-Hughes Act and subsequent acts sponsored largely by organized labor.

Let us be thankful to the American Federation of Labor for initiating the present movement toward federal aid for education in America by requesting in its annual convention, in 1935 that the President of the United States appoint a committee to investigate federal aid for vocational education. Dr. Floyd Reeves, who served as chairman of the President's Advisory Committee on Education, recently stated that the American Federation of Labor had done more than any other group toward implementing the federal aid program. To organized labor let us be grateful for sponsoring the first important movement toward

equalizing educational opportunity in America.

Let us be thankful to the president and secretary-treasurer of the American Federation of Labor for appearing before the resolutions committees of both the major political parties in the recent presidential election and requesting planks supporting academic freedom, federal aid for education, extended facilities for vocational education, and enlargement of the program of the Department of Labor, including the Children's Bureau.

At a time when powerful pressure groups are demanding retrenchment in education, let us be thankful to the Permanent Committee on Education of the AFL for sending recently to all affiliated state federations and central labor bodies the strongest statement in favor of adequate educational facilities and rights of teachers ever issued by any powerful lay group in America. The program includes: (1) adequate financial support for schools including state and federal aid; (2) reduction in class average to twenty-five pupils; (3) tenure of office; (4) sound retirement systems; (5) sick leave; (6) adequate salaries, etc.

Let us be thankful for the excellent co-operation of state federations of labor with the support of which nearly all tenure laws, programs of state aid, and retirement laws have been enacted into law.

Let us be thankful to hundreds of central labor bodies which, in local communities, have valiantly opposed efforts to curtail public education and vigorously battled against unjust dismissal of teachers and political control of the schools.

Let us be thankful that in the present crisis organized labor is taking a firm stand against using the emergency as a medium for curtailing educational facilities or for lowering standards of education. The Permanent Committee on Education of the American Federation of Labor after meeting (on October 16, 1940, at the AFL headquarters) with representatives of the U. S. Office of Education, the President's Advisory Committee on Education, the NYA, the CCC, the Federal Board for Vocational Education, the Federal Apprenticeship Board, and other government agencies, adopted important recommendations related to education and the national defense program. The members of the Committee together with consultants from the labor movement unanimously agreed that the educational phase of the defense program should in no way interfere with the regularly established public school system in America and that all educational agencies of government should be subject to standards established over the years by the Office of Education and the Department of Labor.

IRVIN R. KUENZLI



# The President's Page

## NAM Investigates Textbooks

ON WEDNESDAY, December 11, the *New York Times* gave large space to an announcement of the National Association of Manufacturers. According to this announcement the Association has suddenly become greatly interested in the cause of popular enlightenment. It has launched a comprehensive inquiry into the content of the materials of instruction in the public schools.

The Association announces that it "has engaged the services of Ralph W. Robey, Professor of Economics in Columbia University, to abstract all textbooks in the field of history, civics, sociology and economics in general use in the public school systems of the country." Presumably, the manufacturers, moved only by the compulsions of public spirit, have thrown all questions of expense to the winds. Some eight hundred textbooks are to be passed in review. There would seem to be opportunity here for writing half a dozen or a dozen doctoral dissertations.

In order to allay the suspicions of the chronically suspicious, the inquiry is to be limited to "the *objective* (author's italics) function of simply abstracting such books, primarily by means of actual quotations which will illustrate the author's attitude toward our governmental and economic institutions." The announcement goes on to say that "the question whether such an attitude is right or wrong or neutral is something which individual readers of the abstracts will have to decide for themselves. Naturally, we will urge that the abstracts be used only for preliminary analysis and that each manufacturer should read in full any book which, on the basis of the abstracts, seems to him to be of questionable merit."

These fine words, and others that might be quoted, will scarcely allay the suspicions of the members of the American Federation of Teachers, the members of the organized labor movement, or any informed body of citizens in our democracy. We shall remain a "wee bit" suspicious even when the Association assures us that it is undertaking this costly inquiry in the name of national defense and the cause of "human freedom."

We shall remain suspicious because the record of the manufacturers in the advancement of American democracy and public education is not particularly notable. If the old struggle for human freedom, for the curtailment of special privilege, for the improvement of the lot of ordinary men, for the bringing of the abundant life to all—a struggle whose successes mark the more glorious epochs in the history of our people—is to be seen anywhere today, it is to be seen in the struggle of the working people to organize, to improve their conditions of work, to raise their standard of living, to achieve a higher status in the

American community. In this struggle the National Association of Manufacturers has not been conspicuously on the side of democracy. On the contrary, it has fought the labor movement without ceasing and, though at times vanquished, has never surrendered. Also, if one examines the history of the struggle for free schools and popular enlightenment in the United States, this organization and its spiritual predecessors are not reported in the forefront of the battle. (It might be a wise use of funds to prepare for the manufacturers a few abstracts from a good textbook in the history of education.) This sudden conversion to the cause of public education obviously merits the attention of a student of abnormal mental phenomena. We are reminded, moreover, of the ancient proverb found in the second book of Vergil's *Aeneid*: *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentis*—"I fear the Greeks, even when bringing gifts."

A careful reading of the account in the *New York Times* reveals grounds for fearing these particular Greeks. It is stated that the director of the inquiry "has long been one of the foremost critics of 'the socialism of the New Deal.'" Can it be that the Association is not entirely satisfied with the results of the recent election? Or can it be that it is launching a campaign to introduce its particular brand of political propaganda into the schools? It would seem just possible that this may be so. The announcement does say something about "analyzing sound means by which the concept of private enterprise and the details of its operation may be taught in the schools." I wonder what this concept means. Could it be made to embrace public education or the post office? And does it call for the organization of employees? These are interesting questions.

There is a slightly familiar ring in all of this. It sounds very much like the campaign carried on by the power companies in the 1920's to protect watered stock and to discredit public ownership and management of various utilities, a campaign which was eventually exposed by an investigation under the Federal Trade Commission.

It would be interesting and relevant to know the frame of reference which will operate in the selection of the "actual quotations." *Objectivity* has its limitations. It would also be interesting and relevant to know how many of the manufacturers, with their appetites for learning whetted by the abstracts, proceed to read the eight hundred books, or even a single book from "kiver to kiver." Perhaps the object of public enlightenment may be served after all. Perhaps the age of miracles is still with us. Here is an inquiry which in itself should net a whole flock of doctor's degrees.

GEORGE S. COUNTS



# Appropriation and Appreciation for the Public Schools

Walter G. O'Donnell

THE FUTURE of public education is tied up with the public purse strings. Tighten those strings and the public school faces financial suffocation, choked off from its source of support; loosen them to provide the necessary public appropriations for education and it will be possible to maintain the high standards of popular education required for the effective operation of modern productive processes and democratic social control.

*Defense Appropriation.* To strangle the public school system with indiscriminate retrenchment, especially in these troubled times, is to paralyze vocational efficiency and industrial progress, deaden culture and national morale, and embalm the remnants of a democracy shorn of its educational bulwark. A highly industrialized society is erected and operated only by an educated people. Technological improvements, as the basis of material progress, have their origin in the developments of science and the indispensable services of education. Whether engaged in the destructive activities of mechanized warfare, or the constructive accomplishments of orderly times, an industrial nation such as ours must rely upon the skill, good judgment, and co-operation of a well-schooled populace.

People deprived of the advantages of education are inefficient in war as well as in peace. It is a narrow view of national defense that overlooks the vital place of public education in our total defense. When the ship of state throws over its educational institutions as ballast it will not be long in sinking, for our cargo of education is not a dead weight but the dynamo of increased energy that makes possible the preservation and progress of the state.

Those who would now undermine the financial foundations of the public school, under the pretext that expenditures for national defense necessitate a reduction in local tax burdens, are giving aid and comfort to the enemies of democracy who could not conscript a better crew of sappers to undermine our first line of internal defense. Every public appropriation for education is an appropriation for national defense, for a grenade in the hands of an intelligent citizen imbued with a deep sense of loyalty and rational appreciation of the values of democracy is a far better instrument of defense than a whole battery manned by ignorance.

*The Way of Reason.* However, the emotional appeal of patriotism, and the traditional assumption that the American people have faith in public education as an inseparable ally of democracy, are not enough to guarantee

a sufficient source of revenue for public education. Emotionalism is an erratic force not easily confined to constructive channels. Popular feeling is too fickle to serve as a foundation for any institution. It is as safe to erect a building on quicksand. The appeal to reason may be a more tedious process, but its results are more lasting. Educators, as the trustees of the civilizing agencies of education, would be untrue to their profession and inconsistent with their fundamental teachings if they would resort to any other method to justify the existence, maintenance, and extension of our system of public education.

In any contest between education and anti-school propaganda, educators will be wise to utilize their own educational resources and not stoop to an equally obnoxious pro-school propaganda. Education has the power, through reasonable analysis, to expose and counteract the fallacies of propaganda, and to relinquish this power would be to abandon the field of contest to propagandists and admit the defeat of education as a method of social control.

Vital faith is rooted in reason. Renewed faith in the public school, with a reasonable willingness to supply public funds for its support, will come through a wider appreciation of its good work. Faith and good works go together. Appropriations follow appreciation. There is a reasonable way to a stronger general faith in the public school, a stronger faith in democracy, and a stronger faith in national integrity and progress. The reasonable way is the way of education. It is the only sure way.

*Hard Facts to Face.* The present crisis in public education calls for a practical approach to the problems of public finance and public relations as they affect the schools. Educators can no longer afford to dwell in the realm of consolatory illusions. We have some hard facts to face. The public school, and the whole teaching profession, for that matter, is not singularly blessed with inexhaustible sources of revenue earmarked for education by Providence. God may take care of the birds of the field, but if teachers rely upon a diet of bird seed, they will not have much energy left for idealism. Santa Claus has never offered to include a public school in his deliveries. Public education is just another form of social service bought by the people, collectively, when they are convinced that its utility is worth the price and value balances cost. Like every other commodity or service they buy, whether individually or through the collective process of taxation, they appraise its value and pay accordingly.

In these days of high-pressure advertising and salesmanship, when the consuming public is bombarded by innumerable inducements to part with their income for a wide variety of goods and services, public education has to be "sold" to the community. Unless the public school makes an equally effective appeal for general support of its services, it will lose ground in the shuffle of competing desires, needs and wants stimulated by commercial advertising. The income of the individual, the community, and the nation is limited; possibilities of expenditure are unlimited. It is for schoolmen to provide a popularized factual version of their educational accomplishments that will generate a sense of public appreciation of the public school and thus assure a fair allocation of expenditures for public education.

*Adversity.* Any hopeful assumption that education, somehow or other, will receive constant public financial support because of some vague, intuitive "loyalty" of the masses of the people to the democratic ideal of equality of educational opportunity is amply refuted by recurrent election returns on public school levies and bond issues that prove a definite lack of popular support for the public school in many localities. In some sections, including Cleveland, where the voters have rendered fairly consistent support of bond issues and tax levies for highways, bridges, relief, and other forms of public improvement and social service, the public school issues have met with strong opposition and repeated rejection at the polls. While this opposition has been instigated by certain vested real-estate interests and chambers of commerce, the uncritical acceptance of anti-school propaganda by numerical majorities indicates a lack of general appreciation of the values of public education among large numbers of people who are the direct beneficiaries of the public school. The dice are not loaded to roll out a natural for public education.

The extension of educational opportunities to the masses has met with resistance throughout our history. It took a long uphill fight to establish the public school system a hundred years ago, and it will take a longer one to maintain the schools at standards sufficiently high to meet the increasing educational needs of a progressive democratic society. Education is engaged in an incessant struggle to perpetuate civilization, and unless educators become

more actively interested in the preservation and progress of public education, ardent missionaries for the cause with which they are identified, they will fail in the administration of their trust.

The day when teachers could lead a cloistered life, complacent, detached, and secure in the assumption that an appreciative public would continue its automatic support of the public school, is past. It is no longer safe to assume that a majority of the people in any community have implicit faith in the value of public education. Some influential groups have never become thoroughly reconciled to the idea of universal education and equality of opportunity for all of the children of all of the people. Others are swayed by selfish personal interests that outweigh their sense of social responsibility. Still others, most in need of the advantages of public education, are without the adequate knowledge and appreciation of the public school needed to counteract the effects of skillful propaganda directed against the schools.

These adverse conditions emphasize the pressing need for every public school system to carry its educational message outside the classroom to the doorsteps of the citizens upon whom public education depends for its financial support. Call this publicity, public relations, interpretation of the public school, or just a plain extension of education, but it is the most effective means whereby the public school can perpetuate itself as an institution.

*Day of Reckoning.* The public school is not different from other institutions, private as well as public, which require the good will of the community for their support. The schools have no lien on public revenue. To survive, they must press their claims with a continuous program of public relations designed to instill in the public mind an intelligent appreciation of the values of public education. Public appreciation is the only guarantee of public appropriations. Furthermore, there is a duty on the part of educational administrators to render an intelligible accounting of their stewardship. The people who pay the bills have a right to know how their money is being spent and what social dividends are declared on their investment in public education.

Every day is a day of reckoning for the public school system that recognizes this responsibility. This is no





more than is required from other institutions supported by public funds in a democracy. Mass education, equality of educational opportunity, and universal training for citizenship and useful vocations will receive active support in a democracy only to the extent that the people understand and appreciate the educational services rendered. It is unreasonable to expect a person to be an enthusiastic supporter of the public school when he is deprived of the information, understanding and personal contact that are required to engender a sense of appreciation for any institution.

Teachers are apt to overlook the fact that the daily operation of the school, and their aims, methods, and accomplishments in the comparative privacy of the classroom, are practically unknown to the masses of people outside. Few people come inside the schools, and fewer still have any first-hand knowledge of the complicated principles, processes, and problems of modern education. Most of them cling to a stereotyped notion of the teacher and an antiquated conception of the school. In fact, the teacher today works in a secluded environment which has become too much like a *terra incognita* to the majority of the people in the community; and it takes a majority to keep the schools open.

The majority, having no clear idea of the way the schools work, loses interest, and the resulting gap between the public school and the community widens to the point where the whole public-school system is placed in jeopardy. People naturally shun the unknown. As long as the public schools remain relatively unknown to large numbers of people in every community, their general attitude of indifference, cynicism and distrust will be registered in adverse election results on the issues of public-school finance. The public school must face the day of reckoning and render a complete account of its opera-

tions to the public. This does not mean an annual financial report of indigestible statistics, but a day-by-day program of public relations that will enlist the interest, understanding and appreciation of the community.

*Professional Responsibility.* The public is entitled to a knowledge of the objectives, aims, procedure, methods, accomplishments, needs, values, costs, and problems of the public school. This task of interpreting the public school to the people of the community is actually an educational function which only teachers and educational administrators can suitably perform in a dignified professional way. Any desperate resort to narrow commercial publicity devices or propagandist technique is liable to do more harm than good, for the people look for dignity, stability—and education—in their schools.

It is for educators to show, in an educational way, that education yields a return in social value, cultural enrichment, and economic efficiency far beyond its cost on the tax duplicate. The public is deserving of this accounting, and, until the schools embark upon a deliberate program of continuous interpretation, substantial support for public-school tax levies and bond issues can hardly be expected.

Thus the problem of public finance for the public school comes to reside in the hands of educators themselves. It is their problem. Its solution depends upon the acceptance of individual responsibility by teachers acting through agencies of collective action. Like all problems, it comes back to the individual. The teacher is the trustee of the most important enterprise of civilization and the representative of the educational foundations of democracy. In a deeply personal way, it is his professional duty to generate, at every opportunity, increased public appreciation of education in order to insure adequate public appropriations for the public school.

## Dr. John Rockwell vs. Minnesota Spoils

Mary Herrick

DR. JOHN G. ROCKWELL, distinguished State Commissioner of Education for Minnesota, was suspended by the Minnesota State Board of Education on November 30, 1940. No definite reasons have as yet been stated for his proposed dismissal, although two so-called "hearings" have been held and a third set for January 13, 1941. At the second of these hearings, the four Stassen appointees on the Board announced after a conference with the Governor, that they would stop the "hearings" and appoint an "impartial" referee. Dr. Rockwell has not only been unable to secure a statement of the charges against him; he has been refused the right

to speak in his own defense.

The *St. Paul Dispatch*, which has supported Governor Stassen, states succinctly the reaction of citizens of Minnesota in an editorial in its December 30th issue:

### DRUM HEAD TACTICS

Governor Stassen did well in suspending the Board of Education's so-called hearing on the dismissal of Dr. Rockwell and ordering appointment of a referee, but he should not have stopped there. He should have thrown it completely out of the window.

Friday's proceedings might have been suitable for a drum head court martial but this is supposed to be an inquiry into certain specific charges that have been brought



against the State Commissioner of Education. As far as the intimations of Communism are concerned, if nothing more worthy the name of evidence can be found to back them up, they had best be forgotten, with as good a grace as may be possible.

The State Board of Education has accused Dr. Rockwell with being inefficient and with actions inconsistent with the duties of his office. It is a striking fact that this same board, excepting one member, got along with Dr. Rockwell for two years before discovering these impediments to his usefulness. The only new factor that has arisen is the Carstater dismissal. Mr. Carstater, however, has been vindicated by the Civil Service Board. How can Dr. Rockwell be guilty of improper conduct for having opposed the dismissal of a subordinate who was being dismissed improperly?

This is an episode which adds nothing to the lustre of the state administration.

John Rockwell is a pioneer in the application of modern science and modern educational methods to the administration of a state department of education. In the six years under his leadership the state school system of Minnesota has made rapid and remarkable progress. A complete analysis of these concrete and demonstrable improvements would be too long to include here. Suffice it to mention only the work of the divisions of rural education, of Indian education, of the rehabilitation division, where 2,900 cases were handled successfully last year as against 700 in 1934, with no added cost to the State. The status of John Rockwell's professional achievements can best be measured by the considered judgment of his professional colleagues. The following statement from Ralph W. Tyler, chairman of the Department of Education at the University of Chicago, serves as a sample:

"The news that State Commissioner John Rockwell has been suspended from his office comes to me as a distinct shock. Dr. Rockwell is widely known throughout the country as an intelligent, honest and courageous state superintendent.

"He is believed to be one of the ablest state commissioners in the country and Minnesota has been frequently praised for the quality of personnel which it has provided in the State Department of Education.

"I hope . . . Dr. Rockwell will be reinstated and the country at large will know that Minnesota will not let politics interfere with development of a well-qualified and stable Department of Education."

Dr. Rockwell was the honored guest of the American Federation of Teachers at its 1937 convention. The demand for his services in the summer schools of education is greater than his time will allow. His research is distinguished in the fields of physiology and psychology as well as in education. His personal reputation is impeccable. His record as a public official stands four-square on demanding high standards of service from the employees of his department and on appointing subordinates for merit only.

The Minnesota State Board of Education is made up of five members, one to be appointed annually for a term of three years. Since the Governor of Minnesota has a two-year term, usually only two members would be appointed in one gubernatorial term. Accidentally, there

have been four vacancies for Governor Stassen to fill.

Two of his appointees have not yet been approved by the incoming legislature. The actions of this Board make an amazing sequence, even to one who has been through the wars in the Chicago schools since 1933. The Board passed one resolution on November 30, in suspending Dr. Rockwell:

*"Be It Resolved*, That the Board find from the minutes of the meetings of this Board for the last six months and from Commissioner Rockwell's actions in the Carstater removal matter and in his opposition to the appointment of Harry Schmid and Clarence E. Funk that Commissioner Rockwell has been inefficient and is guilty of actions inconsistent with the duties of his office; and that he is hereby suspended for a period of thirty days; and that he be given the right to be heard on said charges, and the question of his permanent removal be considered at a meeting of this Board at 1:30 P. M., December 26, 1940."

Mrs. Colvin, a member of the Board, voted "no" on this resolution.

The story of Eugene Carstater's suspension by this same board is told on another page of this issue.<sup>1</sup> Harry Schmid, who was appointed by the Stassen Board on the day Carstater was dismissed, had been a Benson Farmer-Laborite two years before and had been refused a recommendation by Rockwell for a state position because of the political pressure he applied to get it. Clarence Funk was made Schmid's assistant. Schmid is a member of the AFT as is Carstater.

Dr. Rockwell was suspended on November 30 for supporting Carstater as an unusually competent employee whom he saw no reason for dismissing. On December 7, the Minnesota State Civil Service Commission ordered Carstater's reinstatement, upholding unanimously every one of Rockwell's contentions in regard to Carstater. This decision left the State Board high and dry. When they met on December 18 to refuse Carstater's reinstatement, they passed a second resolution on Rockwell, as follows:

*"Be It Resolved*, That the State Board of Education, at its meeting to be held on December 26, 1940, should consider all matters pertaining to the acts of John G. Rockwell during his term as Commissioner of Education and all matters pertaining to his fitness and qualifications for such position, and that a copy of this resolution be forthwith mailed to John G. Rockwell at his residence."

The above resolution was signed by H. E. Flynn as acting secretary of the State Board of Education. He was a conservative Republican who was in the Department when Dr. Rockwell was appointed and who was defended by Rockwell from dismissal by Benson forces three years ago.

To an eyewitness from Chicago, the Rockwell "trial" on December 26 was an amazing procedure. We do such things better here. Dr. Rockwell's attorney, Benjamin Drake, asked that the November 30 statement of the president of the Board, Dr. Julius Boraas of St. Olaf's College, promising definite charges before December 26, be read from the minutes of that Board meeting. This was done. Whereupon Mr. Drake asked Dr. Boraas for

<sup>1</sup>See page 13 of this issue.

the charges. And Dr. Boraas said there were none! M. Tedd Evans, assistant attorney general for Minnesota, said any charges would come out in the testimony and proceeded to put Dr. Rockwell on the witness stand, over the protest of his attorney. Dr. Rockwell was asked the most amazing and irrelevant questions. No mention was made of his remarkable record of six years of service to the State, and he was refused the right to read a careful statement he himself had prepared.

The questions asked Dr. Rockwell are given verbatim in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* of December 27. He was asked whether he knew that a certain employee of the State Board was a Trotskyite. He said he had learned that she was, but that she was an extremely competent woman, nationally recognized in her field, and that her political views were not expressed in her professional work. (On this same day, Governor Stassen told reporters Dr. Rockwell was sympathetic to the Stalinists. Such a spirit on his part, if actual, might indicate a miraculously charitable attitude, badly needed in some quarters in Minnesota. However to both charges the Republican *St. Paul Dispatch* says bosh!) Dr. Rockwell was asked if he had a party at his house where some one sold tickets for a benefit for the Streetwear strikers. He was then asked if colored people were present at this party. To this question he indignantly answered:

"What if there were? I do not draw the color line. We employ Negroes and Indians in the Department of Education and I am proud of it. As a state official you should be ashamed of yourself if you imply that we should draw a color line."

Dr. Rockwell's secretary was asked about friction in the department, and whether he ever swore. She was also asked questions about Dr. Rockwell's trip to Mexico, in which lay in inference that he went to see Trotsky. Then Dr. Rockwell himself was refused the right to speak.

The entire audience and one member of the Board expressed their indignation at the whole proceeding in no uncertain terms. The president of the Board announced with hesitation that the "hearing" would be resumed the next morning. Six hundred people left the meeting place at six o'clock Thursday evening, and four hundred had returned at half past nine the next morning. While they waited, the State Board conferred with Governor Stassen in his office for an hour and returned to the "hearing" they had ordered only to announce that the "hearings" were not going satisfactorily and there would be no more until January 13, 1941. Dr. Rockwell was refused his only request at this time—the right to have ten minutes to clear his name of the charge of Communism, inferred by the Governor. The audience, however, listened to him after the board scurried out hastily and for three hours thereafter held a public meeting at which representatives of the American Federation of Teachers, Minneapolis labor, St. Paul teachers, and the St. Paul Urban League stated vigorous support of the defendant. One speaker was a Northwest Airways pilot who had accompanied the Rockwells on their trip to

Mexico, where he said neither he nor they saw Trotsky or much else but scenery. A state citizens' committee, headed by Judge Totten of Minneapolis reported its plans for action.

The Governor had advised that the Board appoint an "impartial" referee to hear the evidence. A Minneapolis attorney named Daniel Foley has been made referee, and the State Board, from unknown funds, has employed Pierce Butler, Jr., son of the Supreme Court justice, to replace the free services of the obviously inept Mr. Evans.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has taken public exception to the inference that Dr. Rockwell should be dismissed as State Commissioner of Education because of courtesy toward colored citizens. Walter White, executive secretary of the NAACP, sent the following telegram to Governor Stassen and Dr. Boraas:

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE IS INFORMED THAT AT HEARING YESTERDAY OF HON JOHN ROCKWELL STATE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION BEFORE MINNESOTA STATE SCHOOL BOARD ONE OF THE QUESTIONS PUT TO ROCKWELL BY ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL WAS WHETHER OR NOT HE INVITED COLORED FRIENDS TO HIS HOME AND ACCEPTED INVITATIONS FROM THOSE FRIENDS TO VISIT THEM. HAD SUCH A QUERY BEEN PUT IN STATE OF MISSISSIPPI OR OTHER STATES IN DEEP SOUTH WE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SURPRISED. BUT WE ARE ASTOUNDED THAT MINNESOTA WITH ITS LIBERAL TRADITIONS SHOULD INDULGE IN SUCH HITLER LIKE USE OF SUCH AN APPEAL TO RACIAL PREJUDICE. WE VIGOROUSLY PROTEST THIS AND URGE PROMPT AND UNEQUIVOCAL REPUDIATION BY MINNESOTA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THIS ACT OF ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE.

Miss Florence Rood, representing Local 28 of the AFT of St. Paul, presented the Rockwell case to the Executive Council of the AFT on December 28. The Council voted unanimously to ask the AFL for an investigation of the entire matter and to give Dr. Rockwell its complete support.

The whole episode is puzzling and significant. Is it due only to Governor Stassen's greed for jobs with which to build a local political machine? Is its purpose to discredit the State School Board, to provide reason for legislation abolishing it? Is this really an effort to control and delay the million dollar federal defense program, for spoils or more sinister purposes? It is actually doing this. Or is it a storm signal for a concerted attack on modern democratic education, which is backed by powerful national interests? The answers are not clear.

But one thing is clear. Governor Stassen's administration for one reason or another stands convicted of lending itself to a vicious and completely unjustified attack on the efficiency of one of the best of his state departments, on the merit principle in public education and on one of the greatest of educational statesmen in the country, John G. Rockwell.



# Notes on Academic Freedom

Alice Hanson

(1) *Carstater Case.* Labor won a clear-cut victory over the Minnesota Stassen Republican machine when the State Civil Service Commission unanimously ruled that the State Board of Vocational Education must reinstate E. D. Carstater as Director of Vocational Education. Carstater is a member of the AFT as well as of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Workers who largely carried the fight for his reinstatement.

Carstater's superior, Dr. John G. Rockwell, State Commissioner of Education, who had placed him in his position as Director of Vocational Education, has also been suspended for opposing the State Board of Vocational Education on the suspension and removal of Carstater. The ground has been cut from under Rockwell's suspension in the light of the decision of the Civil Service Commission. The victory, unfortunately, was short-lived for the Board refuses to accept the ruling of the Civil Service Commission and proposes to carry the case to the courts.

Carstater was named State Director in June, 1939. The U. S. Office of Education, which must approve qualifications of personnel, limited its approval by recommending that he be given an appointment on a year's probation. Under the new state civil service law, this probationary period ended on October 22, 1939, at which time he and all other employees with five years' service with the state were "blanketed in."

When his federal probationary year expired on July 1, 1940, the Board of Vocational Education, which is also the State Board of Education with four of its membership of five appointees of Governor Stassen, extended his probation to August 6, the date of the Board's annual meeting. At a special meeting, however, the Board on July 20 voted to discontinue his probationary service, effective as of August 6, at the same time refusing to state the cause for the action. On protest of the Civil Service Commission, the Board was forced to revise its procedure and to extend his probationary period one day to August 7, whereupon it met to suspend him for thirty days without pay. All of these moves were made over the protest of Commissioner of Education Rockwell who, legally and by agreement with the Office of Education, has the power to recommend candidates for appointment and who is also legally responsible for the proper administration of the vocational education department.

On September 5 the State Board of Vocational Education ordered its attorney to file charges against Carstater with the Civil Service Commission. The charges included insubordination to the U. S. Office of Education, neglect, misfeasance and malfeasance in the conduct of

his office, lack of qualification for the position of director through which the State would have lost its federal aid for vocational education, endeavoring to use his office to gain support for the Farmer-Labor party, and falsifying his previous period of employment by the State.

After many delays Carstater's case went to the Civil Service Commission on November 4. The Commission held several hearings and adjourned for a period of time so that each member might review the evidence. When it reconvened it cleared Carstater on every count, ordered him reinstated and paid salary due him from the state from the date of his suspension, July 20. In the matter of salary the Commission could go no farther as it is without authority over federal aid funds from which a portion of salary of the Director of Vocational Education may come.

While the case was pending the Federal Office of Education changed the form of its agreement with the State Department of Education to create "custom made" requirements for the position of Director of Vocational Education to permit the appointment of a successor to Carstater to its liking. Apparently, the Federal Office of Education twice revised the qualifications for a director for Minnesota's defense training program in order to fit Mr. Harry Schmid, who was appointed August 7 to fill Carstater's place, although the latter was only suspended and awaiting a hearing.

The Minnesota Civil Service law, sponsored by such groups as the League of Women Voters, was approved by Governor Stassen. Why has he permitted his State Board of Vocational Education to so discredit it as to lay the groundwork for its repeal?

The attack on Carstater appeared with the advent of the defense training program. What is there in the program—funds, a large training personnel, patronage, favors to certain "influential" persons, the entering wedge into every community in the state with political and other propaganda—to make it worthwhile to politicians to take it over even though by so doing one of the best state departments of education is thereby destroyed?

Has Governor Stassen, through his Board, let loose forces which he cannot now control?

Many persons in Minnesota are asking these questions. The State Federation, through instructions given in a resolution introduced at its last convention by AFT Local 28, of St. Paul, organized a committee to examine the defense program and watch its developments. The central labor bodies of St. Paul and Minneapolis are co-operating with the state federation as well as initiating activities along similar lines. Labor believes there is more than a difference between a state board and



a vocational education director at the bottom of the trouble.

(II) *Gillies Case.* The protection offered Pennsylvania teachers under the state tenure law is now being tested in the case of James Gillies of Wilmerding, Pennsylvania. Gillies, a high school teacher, received a dismissal notice on August 20, 1940, based on charges of immorality and incompetency because he had signed a Communist petition last spring.

In a hearing before his school board on September 3 no witness for the board presented any evidence to show either personal immorality or professional incompetency, though a board member stated that a letter had been received from the local Legion post demanding Mr. Gillies' immediate dismissal. All but one of the witnesses against him had no personal knowledge of his work as a teacher or had known or even heard of him before the Pittsburgh papers published a list of the signers of the Communist petitions.

Mr. Gillies contended that while he is no Communist—he was until recently secretary of his borough Democratic Club—he had every right under the laws of Pennsylvania to sign the petition of a minority party, that the man who asked him to sign is a lifelong friend and neighbor, and that signing such a petition in no way constitutes immorality and incompetency. Gillies' witnesses included two former school directors and others who testified as to his classroom ability and personal probity.

The hearing did not in any way change the decision of the board and Gillies on October 30 appealed his case to the State Superintendent of Instruction. At this writing no decision has been rendered by the Superintendent, although the thirty-day limit has expired by several weeks. In the event of an unfavorable decision Mr. Gillies will carry his case to the Pennsylvania courts.

The Gillies case is being watched by thousands of Pennsylvania teachers who see in it the most serious challenge yet made to their protection under the state Tenure Act.

If the Wilmerding board's interpretation of immorality and incompetency is sustained, no teacher can really take his protection under the act seriously. Pressure from religious, political, or fraternal organizations which have taken a dislike to a teacher's public or private acts or a school board sensitive to organized opposition can make any teacher the victim of an active minority. While other teachers who signed Communist petitions in the 1940 election campaign are particularly concerned with the outcome of this case, its implications are considerably wider than this political issue and strike at the very basis of tenure.

(III) *Dr. Butler on "Academic Freedom."* When Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia University, called his faculty into special convocation this fall, he read a prepared statement which shocked not only the academic but liberal world in general. He set up a definition of academic freedom which excluded students and

which placed something he called "university freedom" above the freedom of the individual teacher. He went further and invited individuals who did not agree with the university's attitude on the present war to withdraw from the staff of the university.

A group of the Columbia faculty including our president, Dr. George Counts, immediately addressed a letter to Dr. Butler in which they sought a definition of his terms and a clearer statement of policy. Their letter, in part, read as follows:

"In the first place, the effectual practice of freedom by a faculty also presupposes in our opinion a student body which is free to criticize, to inquire and to participate responsibly in the life of university and community. Indeed our experience at Teachers College convinces us that a university will most effectually achieve its function of the conservation, communication and extension of knowledge only when both students and faculty share creatively in the total university enterprise. We wish, therefore, that President Butler when he stated that the traditional 'academic freedom' covered only freedom of instruction, had acknowledged that freedom of the student is also important and must be defended.

"In the second place, important as we consider the defeat of the totalitarian dictatorships in the present struggle, we do not believe that the instructor's attitude on the present war or foreign policy of the United States should receive any consideration in determining his status, as a member of the staff of a university. . . . Whenever a university penalizes competent, sincere critics of our economy and government it begins to destroy the very conditions essential to the life of reason.

"Finally, we are not clear about President Butler's distinction between 'university freedom' and 'academic freedom.' If he means merely that Columbia University is unwilling to protect an individual who refuses to abide by the canons of scholarly behavior, we are in accord with his position, provided each case of alleged failure to honor established academic standards is subject to review and decision by a representative jury composed of the peers of the individual concerned. However, if he means that the individual scholar is not to be encouraged to follow the truth wherever he believes it to be leading and that he is to be subject to administrative pressure or control with respect to his findings and pronouncements, we think a very serious issue has been raised."

This statement was sent to Dr. Butler and to the press on October 8. On October 9 Dr. Butler sent the following reply to Dr. Counts:

" . . . So far as I can see, your views . . . are wholly in agreement with mine as so frequently expressed during the past fifty years. Student freedom is, as I have said time and again during those fifty years, quite as important as academic freedom. At Columbia it has long been thoroughly established.

"So far as the present war or any question of public policy is concerned, every member of our University is

certainly at complete liberty to take what attitude he pleases about that war or about any public policy no matter whether that attitude be popular or unpopular. The academic freedom which has so long existed at Columbia protects him perfectly.

"University freedom is the freedom which we all claim and desire as a group. Academic freedom is the freedom which we all desire and claim as individuals. If any question of important conflict arises between the two we

have many years ago established a Committee of Conference representing the teaching staff to take the initiative in trying to resolve the difficulty."

The Academic Freedom Committee believes that this important correspondence should be given as much publicity as possible insofar as it considerably clarifies and strengthens the freedom of the individual faculty member whose liberties seemed to be seriously threatened by Dr. Butler's original statement.

# The Peru, Indiana, Tenure Case

*George K. Wells and Clayton Black*

ALL TEACHERS should be interested in the various ways used by school boards to avoid the requirements as set up in tenure and contract laws. The Peru case is an excellent example of such an attempt.

Several years ago the school city of Peru, Indiana, adopted a "Single Salary Schedule for Teachers," which is authorized under the state statutes. The schedule was divided into four parts, namely A, B, C, and D, with each predicated upon scholastic standing or attainment beyond four years of high school. These classifications provided for rating teachers with two, three, four, and five years of training and were fairly satisfactory to the teachers.

In April, 1939, the school trustees added a fifth classification known as Schedule E which read as follows:

"Class E—Includes teachers who are deficient in one or more of the following:

- (1) Teachers who are considered inefficient.
- (2) Teachers who lack sufficient control over the technique of teaching.
- (3) Teachers who lack sufficient classroom discipline.
- (4) Teachers who lack initiative.
- (5) Teachers who fail to put forth a sufficient amount of effort to secure justifiable results.
- (6) Teachers who have a nonprofessional attitude.
- (7) Teachers who fail to carry out recommendations, suggestions, or requests from the principals, supervisors, superintendent, or the Board of Trustees.
- (8) Teachers who neglect further training in an accepted and recognized summer school.
- (9) Teachers who are underqualified.
- (10) Any other justifiable causes.

Final decision as to teachers' placement in Class E shall rest with the Board of School Trustees."

It may be noted here that the majority of these causes for classification in Class E are very similar to the causes for notice of dismissal under the tenure law. However, under the tenure law the teacher has the right to ask for a public hearing with counsel.

Should this classification stand any teacher could be demoted to a wage so low that he or she could not continue making a living in the city of Peru. It seemed to

be one way of avoiding the opportunity for trial under the tenure act.

Immediately following the adoption of Schedule E, three teachers were placed on this schedule. They were not warned that their teaching was inferior, and one teacher had not been visited in his classroom for two years. Another teacher was visited during the second week of school and criticized for not covering enough ground. The superintendent never came back to recheck later in the year.

Three grade-school principals were notified that, because the State Department had ruled on their commissions, it would be necessary for them to be demoted to teaching positions, since principals with M.A. degrees would be required. The letters stating these reasons were sent out on April 28th; it was later found that the State Board had not ruled until May 8th, and then acted on misinformation. Six teachers, all women, were discharged for being married.

All this furor caused the Peru Teachers Federation to call a meeting. This organization had been inactive, but the president of the Federation asked the teachers if they wanted a Federation. They voted 100 per cent to continue. Then officers were elected. (It developed that the superintendent had taken an active part in the morning to get his choice elected as president. His choice got twenty-one votes to his opponent's fifty-three.) The new president took the chair and a number of resolutions were passed which were to be presented by a Federation committee to the Board. These asked that the married teachers be given their contracts, that the "E" classification be eliminated, or more democratically administered, that teachers have a year's warning before being given "E" classification, and that nontenure teachers be placed on tenure without further bickering. A committee was appointed by the chair to present these at the next regular Board meeting.

However, the feeling that there were many teachers



in the Federation who were present at meetings only so that they might be the first to go to the superintendent with information, and fear that matters could not be openly discussed without being mis-stated because of the spy system caused a group of teachers to organize the Peru Teachers Union, affiliated with the Indiana Federation of Teachers Unions and the American Federation of Teachers. They also affiliated with the local trades council. Resolutions passed by this Union were that the "E" classification be eliminated, married teachers be rehired, the athletic director be rehired, the principals be retained in their principalships, and a committee of the Teachers Union be allowed to sit in on all Board meetings to hear and be heard on all matters pertaining to salaries, contracts and retirement. The president of the Peru Trades Council accepted the responsibility of presenting these resolutions to the Board at its meeting. The Board, threatened with a lawsuit, held an extra session before the regular session and consented to rehire the married teachers.

The superintendent, in an effort to prevent the Federation committee from meeting with the Board, called the chairman of the committee and tried to intimidate him. He replied that he was chosen to represent the teachers and he would meet. The Board turned down all resolutions but one relative to attending summer school in 1939. The president of the Peru Trades Council was also unsuccessful, as were representatives of parent-teacher associations. Later, contracts were offered to all nontenure teachers but the coach.

A committee of the Teachers Union visited the State Department and investigated reports made by the super-

intendent on licenses and permits, and reports on inspection. They found that one teacher hired as coach for two and one-half years and then dismissed because he had no license had never had a permit, although the superintendent had made him think he had a permit when he was hired as a coach. Another tenure teacher had been asked to resign because she was made to believe that she had a permit for only one-half year. It was found that she had a permit for the full year and should have finished the year. Her work in summer school would have entitled her to a state license and her position on tenure would have continued.

On June 13th, instead of meeting at the usual time, 7:00 P. M., the board met in the morning, and the committee of the Teachers Union was prevented from attending.

Board members, when interviewed by one teacher who was placed in Class E, did not seem to be informed as to the reasons for so classifying and stated conflicting reasons or professed ignorance. They also admitted that they did not feel disposed to make investigations.

The Superintendent, on the day following the first Federation meeting, approached two or more teachers with a petition that he asked them to sign. The petition asked that their membership be withdrawn from the Federation. Reports were that he did have some signers, but he never presented the petition to the Federation.

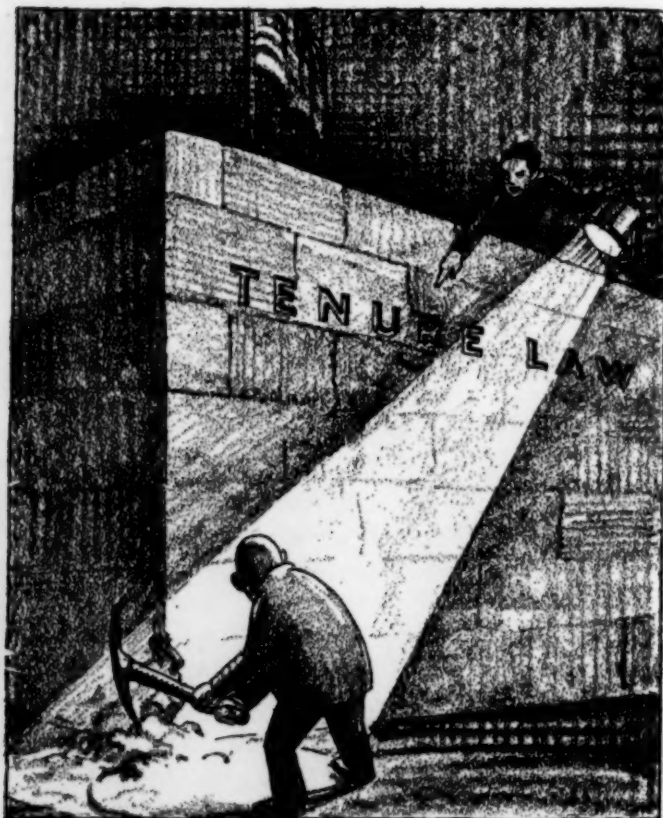
An investigator from the state division of labor came to the city and interviewed the superintendent about the dispute but according to his report accepted the word of the superintendent without further looking for information from others. No further action was taken by him.

Two of the three teachers placed on Schedule E filed suits to set Schedule E aside; after some time one of these teachers was put partially back and above Schedule E; the other was forced to resign from the system for lack of salary, even though he was considered to be one of the best teachers for the past fifteen years. His suit was continued and the court held that the Schedule E was illegal and void, arbitrary and capricious, that it was an attempt to convey, circumvent and set aside and wholly nullify the Teachers Tenure Law.

The defendant, school city, refused to plead further, and the court on October 10th rendered judgment, setting Schedule E aside and enjoining the School Board from using the same; however, the School Board is yet in violation of the injunction against paying salaries according to Schedule E and has not yet made restitution to those who received salaries during the time Schedule E was illegally used.

The school city has appealed the case to the State Supreme Court. The case should be acted upon some time during the first of the year, 1941.

The local chapter of the Teachers Union has had the support of the state and national organizations of the Teachers Union, and some financial assistance has been given by state, national and other local unions.





# "F"—Horse and Buggy Education?

Arthur G. Hoff

THE ASSUMPTIONS underlying the use of the failure system in our public schools appear to be: (1) the pattern of growth can be rather accurately predetermined, and the human organism must be subjected to these influences until the finished product conforms to minimum specifications set up for the rungs in the ladder of development; (2) a pupil who does not achieve these minimum standards must repeat the same learning experiences until they are mastered; (3) this minimum mastery creates a homogeneous group which can be instructed in large numbers by a rather uniform method; (4) failure of pupils to achieve the minimum standards is due in the main to lack of application rather than to inherent ability; (5) repetition of the work is a potent character builder; (6) threats of failure inspire pupils to work to their capacity or achieve the minimum whether or not the capacity is possessed by them; (7) all pupils are endowed with practically the same capacities and interests; and (8) emotional and social adjustment of the child is a negligible factor in normal mental growth.

There is emerging an increasing amount of evidence which shows that these assumptions are grossly fallacious in the most part. The pattern of growth is not entirely predetermined and infallible; it differs with each individual child, varying according to physical and social forces affecting the child. J. W. Wrightstone,<sup>1</sup> in evaluating the "newer" elementary and secondary school practices, found that pupils who were exposed to the child-centered curriculum were definitely superior in growth compared to those who participated in the traditional curriculum. Use of the newer practices, which made the acquisition of skills and knowledges in the fundamental processes but one objective among a half dozen social and personal objectives, demonstrated that the traditional program produced far less growth in five social and personal objectives and no greater mastery in the formal subjects of reading and arithmetic.

The practice of conscientiously employing the failure theory does not create homogeneous groups with equal ability even in narrow areas of subject matter such as English, mathematics, and the like. Ethel L. Cornell,<sup>2</sup> in a study of 5,000 representative children in New York State, found that the extent of variation in a normal group of children in general intellectual achievement is wider than can be provided for by the present graded organization. In this study normal children are the middle 96 per

cent who are not classified as exceptional or the lower 2 per cent and the upper 2 per cent who need specialized provisions. Miss Cornell found that at the age of ten years, the normal range of educational age is more than five school years, and at the age of fourteen, it is about seven and a half years. In practice the grade placement of ten-year-old children placed them within one-half year of the grade level shown by the Stanford Achievement battery tests in only 53.7 per cent of the cases.

In studying the performance in arithmetic of 380 pupils ranging from grade four to twelve and 220 adults averaging twenty-five years of age, Lyle K. Henry<sup>3</sup> found that the best fourth grade performance was equal to the poorest twelfth grade performance with both adults and pupils. Scores of studies in local school systems show great variations in arithmetic and reading performance ranging from four school grades in the sixth grade to five or more in the ninth grade. According to these data, it is evident that pupil failures are practically ineffectual in ameliorating the diversity of achievement in any one grade.

The destructive forces of failures far overbalance the constructive forces of this policy. Students of guidance and mental hygiene agree that failure of a child to pass a certain grade or subject is a serious matter, and persistent failure results eventually in personality disintegration. Eugene S. Farley<sup>4</sup> made several studies on the effect of failures on the part of nearly 1,000 elementary and secondary school pupils in Newark, New Jersey, and concluded as follows: (1) Repeated failure and retardation, even for only one term, defeat their purpose. (2) They do not stimulate effort, but on the contrary, discourage it. The pupil who constantly fails receives no satisfaction from his work and frequently becomes so discouraged that continued effort seems futile. (3) If confronted with impossible tasks he is likely to become antagonistic. This may be expressed in sulkiness and poor behavior, or in truancy and delinquency. (4) The consequences of these attempts to escape may seriously affect the future of the individual.

Scores of individual cases can be cited within the writer's experience which substantiate the findings of Mr. Farley. A brief description of three cases may be significant. The first case is a girl who had failed three times in 7B social science. Conferences with her teachers revealed that progressively poorer work was done by her in the subject which she failed and her other subjects,

<sup>1</sup>J. W. Wrightstone: *Appraisal of Newer Elementary School Practices*. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University. 1938.

<sup>2</sup>Ethel L. Cornell: "Implications for Curriculum Development of the Range in Individual Differences," *Elementary School Journal*. Vol. 38: 13-14. September, 1937.

<sup>3</sup>Lyle K. Henry: "The Performance of Adults of Various Grade Levels in Specific Mental Functions; A Grade by Grade Comparison with School Pupils," *Educational Administration and Supervision*, October, 1939.

<sup>4</sup>Eugene S. Farley: "Regarding Repeaters; Sad Effect of Failures Upon the Child," *Nation's Schools*. Vol. 18, No. 4, October, 1936.

revealing that she was developing a strong dislike for school and was becoming extremely unhappy and anti-social. The principal, cognizant of the destructive effects of such a policy, promoted her to 8A social science, skipping the two semesters of work which she had been deprived of taking. This returned her to the normal social status with former classmates. As a result, she not only passed 8A social science, but improved in other subjects and became normal in emotional and social reactions.

Case No. 2 was a girl whose school record showed less than average success in academic subjects and slightly above average progress in domestic science and art. In the tenth grade she was failed in English, making her one semester retarded in this subject, and therefore one credit short for graduation. She sought permission to carry five subjects during one semester in order that she might graduate with her fellow classmates, but was refused by the school authorities because of her low grades in the past. During the senior year in high school, the humiliation of not being able to graduate with her class became so great that she contemplated quitting school and leaving home as a means of escape. Conferences with her revealed that because of the death of her mother, the responsibility of keeping house for a father, uncle, and younger brother had been hers since she was twelve years of age. Staying in school and facing the problem squarely was mutually decided with the help of a counsellor to be most intelligent solution. The remainder of the last semester was completed successfully, but unfortunately, she did not return the following fall to complete the remaining credit, and no trace has been had of her since.

Case No. 3 is a young man who had been retarded approximately one whole year by the time he reached the senior year because of a hearing defect. This defect had neglectfully not been discovered by the school staff mainly because no medical services were provided and attention to individuals was lacking. Mental and reading tests showed him above average in scholastic ability, but defective hearing deprived him of normal auditory reception in his classes and normal association with his fellow pupils. As a result he was unsuccessful in many of his classes, an introvert socially, and without friends, making him extremely unhappy bordering upon a persecution complex. Frequent misunderstandings of verbal directions and conversations placed him at odds with the school authorities and fellow pupils. Diagnosis of this boy's case was made too late; hence in spite of his passionate desire to complete his high school work, conditions became unbearable, and he left school with only one semester remaining—a failure.

A nonfailure policy seems justified in the light of the foregoing information, but it is not feasible unless efficiency of instruction is increased through professional improvement of the teaching, supervisory and administrative staffs, and improvement of instructional materials. The per-

sonnel needs more stress and training in: (1) breadth of knowledge; (2) greater familiarity with and understanding of at least related fields; (3) greater knowledge of general and educational psychology, including mental and emotional development of the child from birth to maturity, mental hygiene, mental measurement, educational and vocational guidance, and the like; (4) a sound functional educational philosophy; and (5) methods of teaching.

An efficient school system capable of effecting maximum growth in each and every child has a well trained and co-ordinated staff, which has the capacity to administer effectively the modern services necessary for adequate ministering to our school children of today. The guidance program with the aid of every classroom teacher, the guidance director, and the psychologist perpetually watches over the growth of every child to see that the optimum status of social, educational and mental adjustments are made possible. In such a program the classroom teacher is the person chiefly responsible for the guidance, with the guidance director, psychologist and medical officers acting as consultants.

Through continuous professional growth by means of attendance at summer sessions, observation of the best practices, conferences, and professional reading, the entire teaching staff can achieve an intelligent background upon which a new philosophy, which discards the traditional failure myth, can be based. Such a rebirth in outlook is necessary to effect a sound basis for the development of an efficient instructional program which will keep abreast with the research findings regarding the educative process. The teacher and his superiors must understand that if there are forty pupils in a class, forty standards of accomplishment are necessary; that it is the teacher's duty to discover the pupil's interests and abilities which must be developed to the best possible degree; and that social and emotional adjustment on the part of the child are the most important factors in effecting optimum growth.

The most efficient instructional materials securable should be in the hands of every teacher, and every supervisor and administrator as well as the teacher should know how to employ these materials most effectively. Because of economic pressure, teacher loads are continually kept at a maximum, making it practically impossible for teachers to produce more than supplementary materials. Therefore, educators should be ever on the alert for improved instructional materials which can be purchased, thereby reducing the necessity for producing even supplementary materials. The efforts which are generally expended for this purpose can be transferred to planning and personal direction of the pupils where they belong.

The administrative organization should provide for individualized instruction with periods of sufficient length to afford teacher supervision of study and work periods, and the teacher load should make individual attention possible. The number of pupils to whom a teacher can give individual attention in a single class is limited by the capacity of the teacher. The number of pupils per



class needs to be reduced by one fourth from the size of class where only group instruction is intended for use.

After the stage is set for efficient instruction, it is finally up to the classroom teacher to effect instruction which will make a policy of nonfailures possible. Such a situation should secure growth of every pupil to the limit of his capacity if the teacher carries out his full responsibility. The first essential responsibility of the teacher is to become thoroughly acquainted with every child, to study the background of each child by means of the accumulative record, and to attempt to discover the child's interest, temperament, and state of health. Special study should be made of the dull-normal and problem cases which under the traditional philosophy would fail. The teacher needs to constantly guide and watch the progress of each child with special attention to the slow pupils in order to discover special academic, health and personality difficulties as soon as possible in order that remedial procedures may begin immediately. Consultation with specialized staff members such as the guidance director, physician and psychiatrist should help to secure proper adjustment for each and every child, so that failure is eliminated from the child's experience.

The children should be grouped according to homogeneity of social maturity, chronological age and mental age. The subnormal, which compose approximately 2 per cent, should of course be given special instruction

and segregated from the normal children in order that they may be placed in an environment commensurate with their ability, so as to maintain their sense of self respect and feeling of success instead of chronic mental frustration. As children who are superior in mental age develop more rapidly physiologically and socially, adjustment can be effected through acceleration.

In summary, it may be said that knowledge of the educational process to date points very forcibly to an indictment of the present failure system of our schools as an agency of personality destruction which is fraught with dogmatism, ignorance, and deception, and to a renaissance in educational practices which are humane, efficient, and based upon intelligent applications of the results of researches in the field of human growth—physical, intellectual, and emotional—one aspect of it being the adoption of a nonfailure policy in our public schools. The feasibility of universal use of this new practice is dependent upon further enlightenment of the entire educational staff of a school system regarding facts of human growth, recreation of a new philosophy of education based upon increased insight into the highly specialized job of education, continued use of the most efficient instructional materials, efficient use of these instructional materials, effective guidance through intelligent use of teachers and specialized staff, and effective administrative organization.

## Comments on Dr. Hoff's Article

Irving E. Fullington

*Birmingham (563)*



THE SCHOOL IS WHERE PUPILS come together to educate themselves and each other with the guidance of trained teachers and the aid of suitable instruction materials. The public school is subject to constant changes to meet the needs of the pupils and the community.

Mr. Hoff's article presents a discussion of one of the most serious problems in our instruction. It is not a serious part of the educational life of the pupil but it is an expensive feature of our school budget. The failure pupil is always the point of worry and the cause of special effort. Mr. Hoff presents arguments against the system of failing pupils because of its effect upon the personality of the pupil and the economic loss in instruction. His substitute plan is one of a nonfailure policy supported by a pupil-centered curriculum with specialized instruction for the pupils who do not fit into the standard curriculum.

One can easily accept his plan for an ideal school. It would likely solve many of our problems. But when he insists upon a policy of nonfailure of pupils I must disagree with him. Such a policy would destroy one of the best features of training, namely, making the school operate in accordance with natural laws.

The American public school in our present democratic

state is the one we must consider in the discussion of the article. We will not discuss the financial problems involved because money is but one of the means to good living. Let us consider the major objective in this democracy—to provide a society where everyone is given the opportunity to develop into the fullest personality provided an equality of rights is assured in the process. The school, as now operated, is based upon the principle of providing "the greatest good for the greatest number" of people and assisting the abnormal and subnormal ones to find their places in proportionate degrees to their abilities.

There is also a social view that we must take in the discussion. The pupil must be given a suitable opportunity of discovering himself and his place in society and the improvement of his condition. The natural training implies that natural laws must be obeyed, and if there is a noncompliance with them failure or destruction results. Trial and error is an expensive experimental method but an effective one; and if the pupil cannot master the natural lessons, he fails.

There is the character gain in the struggle to learn. There is also a basic character value to failure, provided the pupil gets the benefit from correcting errors. There is defeat or failure in all types of life but they need not contribute to a permanent condition or state.

We teachers must meet the requirements set up by the state. And we will not be able to secure higher standards until the educational level of the general public is raised. There must necessarily be a changing curriculum to meet the new demands but does this imply that there will not be some failures under every plan? The ideal plan of instruction is fine except for the abolition of the failure system.

This action defeats one of the major objectives of education, namely, to learn and make use of lessons. Failure is the result of some lack of ability or improper application. There is no doubt that many pupils are complaining about the meeting of standards as a justification for escaping them altogether. This evasiveness of the human mind is an old trick. It is the result of inherent weakness, instinctive fears, or maybe just the lack of imagination and courage to face the adventure of life; usually it is the result of pure old laziness.

Are we to operate the schools for the weak alone? The average school of strict discipline fails about 10 to 15 per cent of its pupils in each subject and about 33 per cent of all pupils fail one or more topics or subjects during a school course. What has become of all the poor disintegrated personalities about whom Mr. Hoff wrote? All of them who refused to face the issue in school are now facing it in business or general life. We may not have a perfect plan of instruction but we are nearer reality by retaining a failure system than we are by ignoring or abolishing it. Does Mr. Hoff expect us teachers to "drop stitch" the natural laws out of our educational design? When will the pupil learn to comply with any orderly process if he doesn't accept an occasional defeat in good grace?

The several tests he mentioned are standards themselves. Were they arbitrarily selected? Do they not reveal failures? Case One of the failure-repeater in Social Science 7B who was promoted to 8A without passing the preceding subject shows us that the school actually harmed as well as helped her. It contributed to her mental delinquency. Such a policy of cry-baby appeasement is the real disintegrator of personality. Of course, her life did not depend upon passing 7B but the requirement to face the job at hand was a life issue and it should have been met. Let us keep educational standards high as we rearrange the curriculum.

Case Two illustrates the "New School" propaganda. Whenever an inexperienced pupil is allowed to decide what he likes and does not like and then take only the pleasant subjects, usually because he does not have intelligence or experience enough to recognize their value, we are sacrificing our own job. Should not a trained teacher be better suited for outlining a general course of study than a pupil? If we are not better equipped to do it, then we ought to quit work. The pupil in Case Two was a definite example of a "spoiled" child or else she was mentally and morally weak, and failure was bound to be her fate if remedial steps were not taken by her to face the issue.

Case Three presents a different situation and it is not in point with Mr. Hoff's real argument. The failure of teachers to discover this boy's defect in hearing was a tragedy in itself. Such negligence is not proof that all other pupils with defective faculties of sensory impressions would be otherwise normal. This pupil was a failure because he would not accept his deafness. I think remorse and not the school work contributed to his failure. He did not have the courage to try and correct the error or develop substitutes for his loss. The success of millions of people who are defective in hearing is testimony to their ceaseless efforts to overcome their handicaps and bear them with impunity. A man is not a failure because he is defective. He is a failure because he does not use what he has.

It will not be possible to provide a plan for the correction of all the ills which cause failures until an ideal condition results between the home and school. A plan of instruction which will provide a nonfailure condition is a dream and not an actual possibility of becoming a reality. Such a school can not produce the best type of product. Graduates of such a school will certainly have to be disillusioned once they are engaged in productive work. Learning processes should be made attractive but the trial and effort part should not

be eliminated. Learning should not be too easy. We do not desire a goosetep system of education; neither do we want it to become so broad that it will be shallow. So let us accept the possibility of failures occurring in any plan of training and try to remedy both the situation which produced the failure and redirect the pupils' efforts down other channels.

I agree with Mr. Hoff's desire to meet the pupils' needs by an adequate curriculum but there is no proof in his article that a failure system should be eliminated. Let us not create a generation of "softies." The quality of "self-reliance" is still a virtue to be desired in our day. It was the secret of the success of the pioneer's struggle to overcome countless failures. Victory is to the valiant. Let us make an effort to uphold pupil and teacher standards.

## Helen C. Campbell

Chicago (1)



MR. HOFF'S DISCUSSION OF THE present situation in the public schools in regard to the failure system reveals the contradictions and confusions in which many school systems find themselves today. Probably a few teachers still hold with the fallacious assumptions cited in the first paragraph of the article, but in general teachers accept the findings of modern research in psychology and education and are moving with the recent trends.

The elementary school having dealt always with "all of the children of all the people" has perforce developed a curriculum more easily adapted to a great range of individual differences than has the high school. Elementary-school teachers realize the need for more individualized materials and instruction but with the teacher-pupil ratio at approximately one to forty, practical application of the individual method is severely handicapped. In these circumstances there is small possibility of employing other than group methods although the elementary-school report to parents assumes that individual work is the basis of the teachers' estimate of "working efficiently" or "improving." The traditional report card has been abandoned but conditions of teaching have been only slightly changed.

The high schools face a problem peculiar to themselves. It is only within fairly recent years that their student body has represented "the whole curve." Large city systems such as Chicago's are still lagging far behind in providing adequate housing for the oversized high-school enrollment of the past ten years. The resultant evils are the double-shift schools, inadequate provision for study, classes of thirty-five and more, and curtailed school days, and these conditions prevail in the overcrowded areas of the city where home conditions also are sub-standard.

Not only has provision of the proper physical plant lagged. The curriculum remains little changed from that in use fifteen or twenty years ago, designed for a student body who planned to use high school as preparation for higher education or for specific work in technical or commercial fields.

Speaking from the point of view of a teacher of English and later adjustment teacher in a large Chicago high school, I can say that I do not know a teacher who is not anxious to reduce the number of class failures. Our contention is that the reduction must be an honest one, resulting from more effective teaching which can come about only through the adoption of a minimum teaching-load, revision of courses



of study in fundamental or core subjects especially, the use of individualized materials of instruction, facilities for health surveys and correction of physical defects, and proper provision for study space in uncrowded, one-session schools where normal teacher-pupil relationships can be maintained and the benefits of a broad program of extra-curricular activities can be used for enrichment of the curriculum.

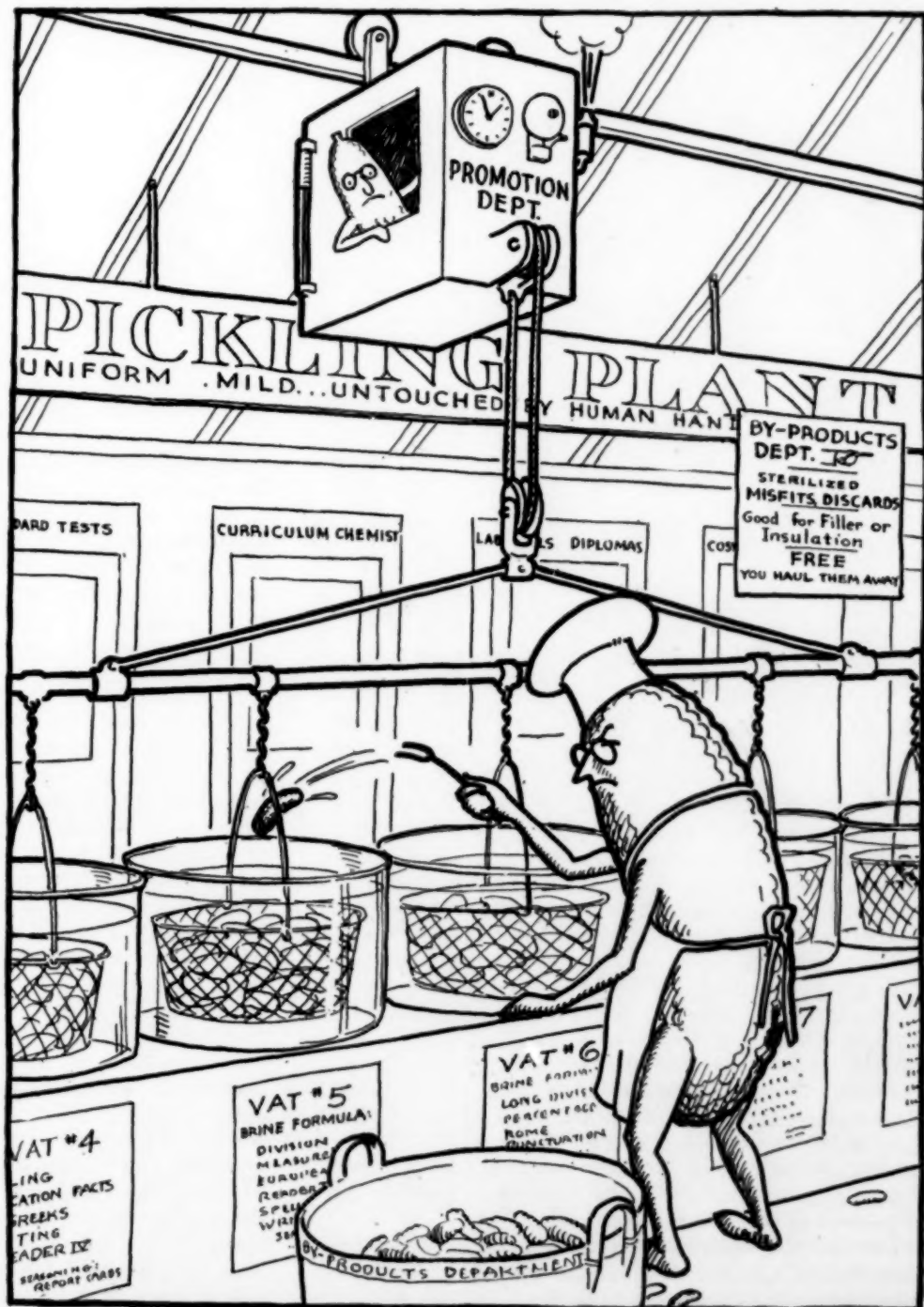
That Chicago's teachers and administrators recognize the extent and complexity of the problem is apparent in the changes which have already begun. To meet the need for a more flexible curriculum, the "Core Curriculum" was introduced in the high schools in 1937, replacing the old, more rigid curricula in use since 1921. The Bureau of Curriculum and teachers' committees are at work on revisions of the courses of study in the core subjects and in some elective groups. The cumulative record system, set up in 1937, provides a folder for each student in which essential personnel data which are available to every teacher are accumulated from first grade through high school. A daily personnel period has been set aside in every high-school teacher's program to be used in the study of individual differences and in counseling. But the skillful interpretation of personnel data develops only with study and application, and techniques of effective interviewing are not acquired suddenly. Materials of study adapted to a wide range of individual differences are still not available. Students showing marked retardation in reading ability have been grouped for special work in English, and for these classes individualized materials and an attractive, appropriate shelf of supplementary reading have been supplied. The progress made by students in these classes testifies to the value of proper materials of study. In the regular classes the need for individualized materials is met with whatever devices the class teachers can discover. Textbooks are still supplied in scant variety. Insofar as further means of adjusting curricula and materials to individual differences are offered, failures can be reduced. Genuine reduction in failures cannot be brought about without fundamental changes in the program, materials and conditions of work. Pressure to reduce failures faster than these changes are brought about can result only in dishonesty on the part of teachers with disastrous effect upon the students affected.

Can failures in school ever be completely eliminated? A definition of what really constitutes a failure is in order if this question is to be properly answered. In Mr. Hoff's list of the fallacious assumptions on which the failure sys-

tem rests is "failure of pupils to achieve the minimum standards is due in the main to lack of application rather than to inherent ability." Perhaps he will agree that this condition is actually the cause of some of the failures in high-school subjects. Like the adults all about them, students are prone to slight an obligation in favor of a special interest or of another more pressing obligation.

There are cases of failure in elective subjects such as stenography which can scarcely be wholly eliminated, regardless of the adaptation of study materials to individual differences.

Mr. Hoff emphasizes the destructive effect upon personality in the case of students failing of promotion. If we carry the philosophy of nonfailure to its ultimate conclusion should we not do away with all such devices as marks, promotions, graduations? Much of our confusion is due to the fact that we give lip-service to the new education and accept a few of its habiliments but, fundamentally, we have made very little change in our system. That we see



the contradictions and realize our needs give assurance that teachers and administrators working together sincerely may do their several parts in bringing about a better order.

## Charles B. Rousseve

*New Orleans (527)*



MR. HOFF'S WELL-ORGANIZED paper indicting the failure system embodies much that appears undebatable. Few would question his statement that the generalizations which have been used to sustain this practice are now regarded as basically unsound in the light of educational research. For the special benefit of boards of public education, he might have included, as an additional argument in favor of a nonfailure policy, the fact that pupil failure appreciably increases the cost of education. This is particularly true at the elementary-school level, where a child failing in certain "promotional subjects" is customarily made to "repeat" a number of other courses in which he has previously given a "satisfactory" account of himself. The procedure represents an unwarranted duplicate expenditure of taxpayers' money.

Pupil failure is, of course, a consequence of our imperfect system of group instruction—a scheme which, with the popularization of education and the rise of the common school, perforce largely replaced the earlier tutorial plan of highly individualized teaching. The underlying reason for the change was primarily one of economy: if the teacher's salary must be drawn from the public coffers, he must justify the expenditure by "educating" not three or four, but thirty, forty, fifty—or more—pupils. Educators soon realized that the plan of group instruction, while it possessed certain advantages, was not without its limitations. Because its procedures were devised in terms of the hypothetical "average child," it failed in many respects to serve the pupil. The system was abetted with the announcement that *the pupils themselves did the failing*.

How best to guarantee for the learner the benefits of effective individualized instruction in a system of mass education, consequently, has become an educational problem of long standing. Mr. Hoff's article suggests how some aspects of this difficulty might be met; his recommendations, if effected, would enhance the efficiency of present systems of public education. While the establishment of a nonfailure plan presupposes a professionally improved teaching, supervisory, and administrative personnel, probably a more important step (among the suggestions offered) lies in the direction of convincing boards of education of the necessity of so reducing teacher-load that the advantages of a reasonable degree of individual attention might become available to every pupil. Several years ago, it may be remembered, Exeter Academy reported favorable results from a reorganization plan wherein class membership had been limited to twelve boys. By way of contrast, it would be easy to cite instances involving public high-school classes of fifty or more pupils, as many as 40 per cent of whom, victims of the pernicious practice of overcrowding over a period of years, are perennial "repeaters." Case studies extending beyond their years of school attendance would doubtless demonstrate that it would ultimately be cheaper for the county or state to provide for such pupils the benefits of a nonfailure system, with all that the plan, as outlined by Mr. Hoff, implies.

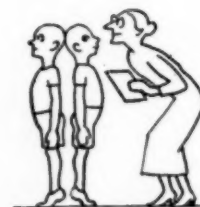
He advocates pupil grouping in terms of social maturity, chronological age, and mental age, with segregation for the sub-normal group, but acceleration for superior pupils. His

policy with regard to the last group might meet with opposition from some quarters. Whether mentally superior children should advance through the school at a faster rate than do "average" pupils or whether they should move at the normal rate while they become subjects of the type of enriching experiences essential to their maximal development is a question not yet finally answered.

Finally, when school systems will have attained the level of efficiency which precludes failure on the part of the learner, there will probably still remain for youth the possibility of failure after the school period. Health fails; banks fail; weather conditions reduce to naught many a would-be bumper crop; in America the "normal" quota of workers who fail in their quest for employment is reckoned at four million. Having eliminated failure from its scheme of things, the school must still prepare young people to face such hazards, must help them attain the calibre of moral hardihood which will enable them to hold their own courageously amid the difficulties of life in a changing and painfully far from perfect social order.

## Ruth Dodds

*Sacramento (31)*



FAILURE OF A PUPIL TO MEET standards set by an impersonal course of study or by the teacher leads, in our schools today, to one of two alternatives: repetition of the grade or subject by the pupil or his passing to another phase of the curriculum with the hope that the gaps in his knowledge will somehow be closed in subsequent exposures in another environment.

To me it seems that both these practices are indications of the failure of the schools—not the failure of teachers alone but of the teachers plus the course of study plus the conditions for work provided by the administration. It is my contention that no boy or girl prefers to fail. Furthermore, the two practices employed by schools today do not attempt to solve the basic problem—the causes of failure.

Studies are continuously being made, but the conclusions are seldom tested. We talk of "inherent ability" (I would say "abilities"); yet our measures of these abilities are woefully inadequate. We sanctify "minimum standards"; therefore their validity is never questioned. The learning process, we must admit, has not been charted. With these major problems of education unsolved, it seems strange to place the stigma of failure on youth alone.

Graduation from high school not too long ago was predicated upon the absorption of at least Caesar's Gallic Wars and Euclid's Principles. Today a diploma from many high schools means a certificate of attendance and the accumulation of a given quantity of credits. Neither system meets the educational needs of today. Both our cultural heritage and our democratic attitudes and techniques must be transmitted to our pupils. Those who cannot "take" foreign languages or higher mathematics must not be barred from all understanding of world cultures. We must be prepared to present certain blocks of information in various ways and in varying degrees of intensity.

"Conditions of work" are too often disregarded. The evidences of inequality of equipment in our schools throughout our nation is generally conceded (complacently by too many). The acceptance by Mr. Hoff of the forty-pupil class as a standard, together with the placing of the obligation on the teacher to set forty standards of achievement and



to make forty judgments on each unit of work, is hardly consistent with other views expressed in his article. Granted that teachers should strive continuously to improve their techniques, it follows that those responsible for the administration of a school should see that conditions obtain which make individual instruction and guidance a possibility.

The extent of the responsibility of the school for pupil welfare is not fully established. Analyses of causes of failure frequently lead from the schoolroom to the home. The insecurity which results from the emotionally unstable home, the languor which evidences malnutrition, the handicaps of defective sight and hearing—these are factors with which the schools have not always been concerned.

Instead of talking endlessly of whether to fail or not to fail, I should prefer to have our authorities, both academic and administrative, get down to the problem of how to make success inevitable.

## Ruth McCafferty

*Chattanooga (246)*



I WISH TO STATE AT THE OFFSET that I subscribe fundamentally to the arguments expounded in Mr. Hoff's article but with reservations. His arguments are psychologically sound but are applicable only in a school system which provides opportunities for unlimited individual development through the proper

psychological, emotional and guidance helps.

Very often the problem of failures is lack of application on the student's part. In such cases every effort should be made to find the reason for this lack and offer stimulation. Should it prove willful neglect, it would be folly to promote him. Such a tendency would develop false standards and values and would promote the assumption that reward came through limited effort. Undoubtedly teachers too often use the threat of failure as a secret weapon. They resort to indiscriminate failing of students who purposely avoid responsibilities as well as those who are mentally and emotionally incapable of mastering the problems imposed upon them.

Even conscientiously employing the failure method does not assure improvement. Take for example a child who failed his 7B mathematics and who must repeat the subject with a group differing widely in mental and social reactions from him. His attitude will probably be abnormal. He will assume an attitude of indifference, inferiority, antagonism or possibly superiority. There is small chance that he will improve in the subject matter and every indication that he will develop disintegrating attitudes unless he is given the proper individual attention and supervision. If the teacher follows along the traditional line of group instruction, she will fail to recognize his individual potentialities and will prove equally as ineffective in his repeated subject.

By a failure, a child may be fortunate enough to contact a teacher who may recognize his difficulties and is able to qualify him in the minimum requirements of the subject. By this readjustment he will profit by the repetition of the course. His greatest profit will be his social readjustment and not the value of the subject matter mastered.

Instances can be cited, too, where a child through failure was accidentally placed in his normal social group. Correct grouping however, is far too important an issue to be left to chance. The solution to this unprofessional practice is, as Mr. Hoff points out, to establish the child-centered curriculum whereby a child may progress according to his ability and interest.

It is now an accepted recognition that individuals learn as

a whole organism. Formal intellectual goals of prescribed subject matter, still the program in many schools, entirely overlook the scope of individual personality. For this reason the failure of a student to meet the minimum standards of a subject does not preclude a development of the whole organism. His social, emotional, and mental personalities have undergone change and should be permitted to continue in the process of further growth.

A child accepts failure as a degree of self-inferiority. He concludes that he is intellectually apart from his social group. His personality suffers frustration and insecurity. His disintegrated personality development may establish false values of moral attitudes and cause him to resort to deceptions of all kinds in order to hide his disgrace.

The failure practice is a procedure adhered to under the formal type of instruction methods where all children were considered of like mental and emotional mold and consequently to be given like group instruction of specified subject matter. Both children and course of study were organized in a chronologically-graded system of instruction based on a set of "subject" textbooks. Promotions up the ladder-like scheme of grades were carried on by competitive examinations.

Such a conception that a child should be trained to meet the social adjustments of his life then rather than for his adult life was inconceivable. Only recently has there been increasing emphasis placed upon mental and emotional hygiene, personality adjustments and personality integration. With this present trend toward newer teaching philosophies has come a more conscious effort to develop the individual soundly and wholesomely so that he may be prepared to adjust himself to the changes that occur in his relation to his social group.

No matter how sound and progressive an instructor's educational philosophy may be, the proper amount of individual attention and supervision cannot be given by a teacher who is carrying a teaching load of from forty to sixty-five students. It is a physical impossibility under such a handicap to take into account so many individual personalities and to do justice to the individual. Under such conditions it is concluded that the child will continue to be failed. Unless there is a system where an educational staff includes a guidance director and specially trained helpers, little headway can be made to guide children in their individual interests.

Even teachers who have found the enlightenment of the modern concept of education have often been prevented from exercising it because of the formal instruction system under which they are working. Until the educational program and policy of school administrators are educated to the newer ideas of child-centered curriculum, little can be done toward giving individual personalities their proper attention. As long as we have the traditional school system, with the outrageous teacher-load in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities we will have personality maladjustments and failures.

## Ada Lefkowitz

*Philadelphia (192)*



IT SEEMS TO ME THAT MR. Hoff's excellent plea for more effective pupil development through improved social, instructional and physical facilities in the educational system is weakened by the fact that the "failure" system he castigates has been, for at least a decade, practically eliminated from our elementary and junior high schools. Secondly, I question any consideration of nonfailure as continuous pupil progress.

I teach English in a large, over-crowded high school, which,

I know, from my observation, reading, and discussions with teachers in various sections of the country, presents a very average picture of the American public high school. When the students are admitted to us, we give them diagnostic tests which consistently reveal that large numbers of them are unable to comprehend the thought of the printed page or write a short, lucid paragraph. In addition, few of them have work habits or take any joy in overcoming difficulties; the inertia which nine years of 100 per cent promotion, regardless of the type of achievement, has developed is not broken down until the shock of the first report card startles them into superhuman effort or utter, complete discouragement.

General and achievement courses are offered to students unable, at this late date, to acquire sufficient background for subjects requiring basic skills and knowledge. But they know, as we do, that employment is still based on accomplishment, and many students, when they realize that they will not be able to meet standard employment requirements, for example in subjects like bookkeeping and stenography, if inadequately prepared in fundamentals are very eager to acquire these. So, despite the pressure of some 250 pupils daily, lunchroom duties, clerical work, and paper marking, in our crowded school, with an over-lapping shift whereby every room is occupied from nine until three-thirty, we try to provide the needed individual instruction.

Until I was appointed to senior high school four years ago, I taught in the elementary and junior high schools. The teachers are as distressed as we are about poorly prepared students,

but they are helpless. Numerous minor subjects, each one regularly supervised by experts, an activity program, the play and project approach in teaching, compulsory 100 per cent promotion, in fact, the entire progressive education program, without progressive conditions, is expected of them.

I saw a splendid example of progressive education in a fourth grade in the Lake Michigan shore section. The class was studying city development by building a miniature modern city, all subjects being correlated about the project. There were two teachers for that class of twenty-five! Perfect physical conditions, the most modern equipment, highly literate parents, each supplied with a *Study Outline for a Curriculum Guide for Parents* facilitated what the teachers explained to me as continuous pupil progress rather than nonfailure. Although there is apparent 100 per cent promotion, failure is not ignored but rather prevented by the normal urge of students to participate in fascinating projects; remedial classes, with no more than four or five in a group, are part of the regular system and aid children who could not otherwise keep up with the class.

With the financial restrictions of the average public school, we have, not continuous pupil progress, but mandatory promotion without achievement. Rewarding a student with promotion he has not earned will eventually produce people possessing mental and spiritual rickets. Mr. Hoff's article would have been stronger had he presented, also, the devastating effect of the nonfailure system when attempted under improper conditions.

# Learning the Ways of Democracy

A Review by Kermit Eby

*Learning the Ways of Democracy*<sup>1</sup> is a very apt title. It calls attention to the fact that democracy and democratic practices must be learned; it suggests that we have assumed too long that government "of, by and for the people," religious freedom and civil liberty are ours by heritage and that no effort need be made by us to guard our patrimony. It implies that the time has come to translate our good intentions into action. And, finally, it asserts that youth can be educated to rally around the positive values of democracy as enthusiastically and creatively as the Hitler-Jugend have rallied around the nihilistic doctrines of the Nazis.

The question of the hour—the question which every educator faces—the question which must be answered if civilization is to survive—is: Are there enough men of good will and courage in American education to rally this generation of American youth around the positive teachings of brotherly love, creative activity, equal opportunity for all, justice for the poor and oppressed, respect for orderly processes or will educators, too, give way to the

destruction of war and hate? Perhaps the one fact of this hour which gives me pause beyond any other is the lack of plans for the organization of society after the present war. From 1917 to 1919 organized groups of far-seeing Americans anticipated and organized a world of leagues and courts, of liberated minorities and lowered tariffs. Today, the voices of the prophets are few and weak and scattered! How far back must civilization go before we can start anew?

American educators are alert to the need of educating for democracy but their approaches are varied and diverse. In Chapter One, the authors point out six of the more common ones as seen in schools. School No. 1 is marked by the influence of the school administrator who outlines what he wants; efficiency is the watchword, benevolent autocracy the pattern, and results the criteria. In school No. 2 the students are kept busy practicing the tools of democratic activity which is confused with creativity, and confusion sometimes is the result. No. 3 is different from No. 2 in that considerable time is given to developing the formulas for democratic action. Students and teachers co-operate in the process. Teacher reaction to the plan is good but pupil reaction is disquieting because of a

<sup>1</sup>Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association and the American Association of School Administrators: *Learning the Ways of Democracy, A Case Book of Civic Education*. Washington: National Education Association and the American Association of School Administrators, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W. 486 pages. \$1.00.



feeling that little is accomplished. Taxpayer reaction is unfavorable—"It costs too much." In No. 4, freedom to do as one pleases is considered the heart of democracy, but unfortunately freedom if it is completely undisciplined leads to lessened efficiency, and men have been known to prefer order to anarchy. School No. 5 emphasizes "socially useful jobs with widely shared responsibilities which engage the entire school." Through activity an interest in the community is developed. Techniques are changed, when it is necessary to do so, and democracy is made to work. School No. 6 was the last observed. The laws of learning and of man set the limits to democratic education in this school. Here the point is emphasized that there are controls in our society outside the schoolroom. Each of the six schools mentioned had one thing in common. Democratic efficiency was their goal. There was a consciousness in the mind of all that democracy must be made to work in a highly complex society, and it was demonstrated that democracy "fully understood" is more efficient than dictatorship. Democracy permits a revision of plans; it considers that mistakes can be made. Its leaders need not be infallible. In the process of educating for democracy it must never be forgotten that ends and means cannot be confused. Democracy cannot be achieved by autocratic means, nor the golden rule be separated from practice.

Some educators believe that democracy is learned by living it; others by teaching it. As usual the truth is somewhere in between, because good education combines "thought and action." As we survey the American scene we cannot doubt that we need to translate our abstract ideas into specific programs. Boys and girls in school, like their parents, vary in their understanding of democracy. In an analysis of 2,006 pupils' statements in regard to democracy, 63 per cent defined democracy in terms of rights and privileges<sup>2</sup> and 27 per cent in terms of responsibilities as well as rights and privileges. This study impressed me more than any other item in the entire book, for it seems to me that the greatest threat to democracy is not that of the fifth column, real or labelled, but, instead, the apathy of the average citizen, the venality of many politicians and the press, and above all the insistence on material comfort by almost all men at any cost. The price of freedom still is eternal vigilance and, it might be added, work. The meaning of democracy can be taught, and the American tradition interpreted as the Fieldston School in New York City demonstrates so well.<sup>3</sup> Grade Ten in Tulsa, Oklahoma, has a course in the "American Dream"; Grade Eleven in Shaker Heights, Cleveland, offers "The Changing Culture of American People."<sup>4</sup> These units of study and others are clearly outlined from pages 51 to 61 and should be examined by every teacher anxious to do his part in building America.

Civil liberties are the foundation on which our kind of society rests. Deny them and democracy has been

killed by its protectors. Voltaire's classic utterance, "I may disagree with what you say, but I will fight to the death for your right to say it," needs to be incorporated into our being today as never before. And so schools like Grade Nine in Cleveland have a course in "Public Opinion" in which our democratic heritage is traced from Magna Charta to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and should be traced to the Wagner Act.<sup>5</sup> Individual worth, respect for every personality, is taught in the above school and others, and here we need to remark that "*Attitudes are contagious. The treatment of students as individuals should be the very heart of teaching and school administration.*"<sup>6</sup> As Dean Ernest Melby of Northwestern University so truthfully said, "If you don't love them, you can't teach them." Chapter Two emphasizes also the necessity for dealing directly with problems of human relationships, and appreciating the contribution of minorities to our culture. The best practices in the more progressive schools are outlined and definite conclusions arrived at.<sup>7</sup> The most outstanding conclusions are (1) that those who would educate for civic understanding must plan for it, and (2) that "Thoroughness of inquiry is desirable in the study of social problems." One cannot think in a vacuum. Those who would teach citizenship should practice it. Civics teaching is afflicted by twin evils, which teachers will do well to guard against. The first is a naive sentimental attitude which makes political activities seem to be as the idealist would like them to be. Such an attitude is found in many teachers whose main connection with civic life is through books. Its effect is to bring civics instruction into disrepute with students who know the facts. The second evil is that of cynicism, which assumes that all public life is shot through with corruption. It results in antagonism toward public affairs and in defeatism. The good citizen is neither naive nor cynical. He sees political life realistically as a mixture of good and bad practices and seeks to promote the good and reduce the bad. Education for citizenship is best advanced by teachers who are practicing citizens who work actively for civic improvement, and who encourage their students to do likewise.<sup>8</sup>

Classroom teaching is emphasized in Chapter Three. If democracy and democratic values are ever infused in the warp and woof of American life, it will be because the classroom teachers of America are democratic. Democracy is not something that is learned only in civics classes. Art teachers and shop teachers by working at common problems may do a better job of living with their students than civics teachers who think that memorizing the terms of the presidents and names of the people in the president's cabinet and the numbers in the Senate and House are essentials. There are many techniques for developing co-operation and they need not be formalized. It must never be forgotten that guidance services are important;

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

but the main work of school takes place in the regular classrooms.<sup>9</sup> It might be added that there is no greater boon for better teaching than reduction in class load which makes more intimate association between teacher and student possible. Good teachers help students discover and develop their abilities. In one classroom in Lincoln High School, Los Angeles, a teacher strengthened the morale of a youngster who faltered while reading aloud when she said, "It is not easy to stand up and read to a whole class. Walter is brave."<sup>10</sup>

Abraham Lincoln once said, "God must have loved the common man, he made so many of them." Teachers must not forget this Lincoln truism, for it is the great mass of Americans who hold the destiny of our nation in their hands. If young Americans learn to plan, execute and evaluate in school, the transfer to life should be easier. The George School, in Pennsylvania, planned a model community;<sup>11</sup> in Framingham, Massachusetts, classes organized town meetings, and brought before their group the practical problems which the regular town meetings faced<sup>12</sup> and the Shaker Heights, Cleveland, students learned to evaluate their own school program. Racial characteristics were studied in the highly cosmopolitan Benjamin Franklin High School in New York City. The best job of developing a sane attitude toward freedom of speech was done by a class in "Modern Problems" in South High School, Omaha, Nebraska. The subject under discussion was a mimeographed sheet entitled "Finns Hail Soviet Aid." In the discussion it was admitted that the source of the material was communist, but the class argued that suppression of communistic literature would make our news sources "like Russia's" and so it would.<sup>13</sup>

Student government has been discussed before and probably will be again. So much of Chapter Ten may be repetition. Nevertheless the problem of student responsibility toward his world must be faced. We don't live tomorrow—we live today. The students' responsibility for guarding the students transported by busses to the school at Lincoln School, Ypsilanti, Michigan, and the supervision of activity by Deatsville, Alabama, student leaders prove that high-school students can assume real responsibility. Mount Pleasant High School in Schenectady, New York, operated successfully by placing the responsibility for his conduct on each student. Problems of a disciplinary nature are handled by guidance experts.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps they are more nearly right than we think; aren't problem youngsters usually the product of their environment? There are many devices for developing student responsibility for their school and community, and about all of them have been encountered by teachers at some time or other. So we can go on to the next chapter—School Activities in the Community.

School activities should most certainly carry over into

the life of the community; and yet, "Why is it," a principal asks who has watched students come and go for twenty years, "that there is so little interest in civic affairs by the graduates of our schools?" Perhaps the answer is a lack of realism on the part of the teachers, and undoubtedly it is contributed to by the fact that many schools are isolated units in their community. They are pedagogic islands cut off by channels of convention from the world which surrounds them, and the inhabitants of these islands rarely venture to cross these channels during school hours.<sup>15</sup> After watching education in Chicago for three years, it seems to me that the schools will never serve the community adequately until they are open from 9 A. M. to 12 P. M., until they are centers of community life, and until the teachers and principals are no longer persons who sign in and out daily, but instead are real sharers in the life of the community they serve. There are, too, many rootless teachers in our big American cities. This gap is not an insuperable one, however; it can be bridged. Benjamin Franklin High School in New York draws its boys from East Harlem and Yorkville, two communities made up of many racial groups. Seventy-five per cent of the students are foreign-born. The boys in this school have formed a friends-and-neighbors club to establish a friendly understanding between the different racial groups.<sup>16</sup> Through the activity of the same students, a WPA housing project was developed in the community and better homes built for their parents. Another New York school, Wadleigh High School for Girls, has a Block Beautiful Club<sup>17</sup> and thus fosters community goodwill. The teachers of John Marshall High School, Minneapolis,<sup>18</sup> have organized community tours in order to become acquainted with the social and economic problems of Minneapolis and its environs. Columbus, Ohio, high-school teachers visited industrial Detroit and studied the pros and cons of the labor-automobile industrial conflict.<sup>19</sup> Months after the visit they considered it one of their best experiences. These activities are illustrative of others carried on in many schools. Again it should be emphasized that only careful study of the text will bring out the varied ways by which schools reach out into their individual communities. The gap can be bridged.

There must be a sympathetic school administration, an administration which believes in the creative activities of good teachers and is behind every effort of teachers and students. The best teachers in a school system are not easily regimented and are usually insistent on an outlet for their creative genius. Consequently they are not so easily fitted into the educational hierarchy. In these troubled times there are administrators who prefer teachers who are docile, who ask no questions and cause no trouble in the community. Frankly, the school administrators of

<sup>9</sup>Op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 151-152.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 198.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 264.

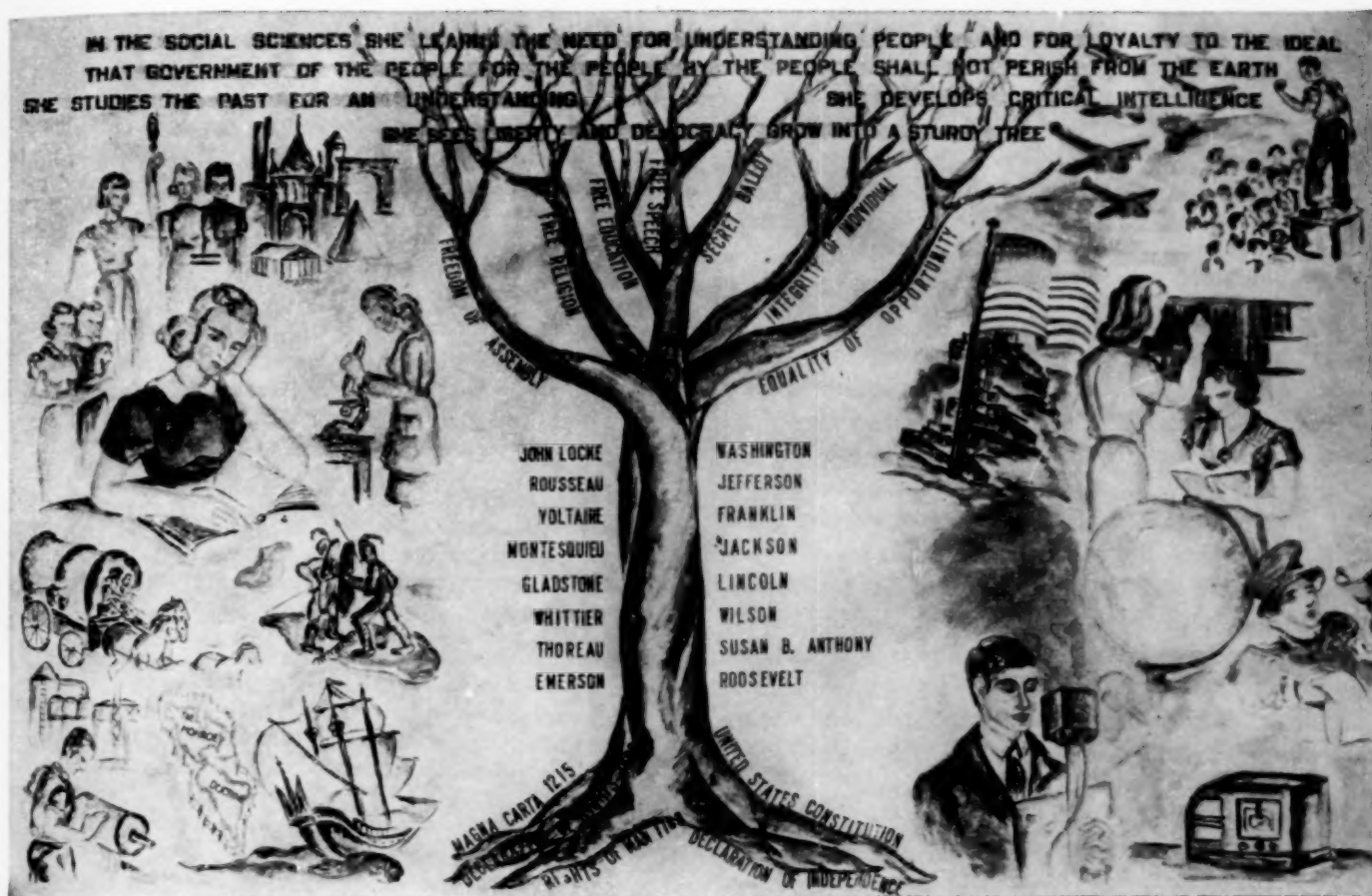
<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 269.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 270.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 275.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 278.





The Tree of Liberty  
Courtesy NEA Educational Policies Commission

From the Julia Richman High School, New York City  
Designed and painted by students of the school

today must make up their minds to stand between creative teachers and reaction. If they do not do so, there will be no "education for democracy."

Our modern city school systems are much like corporations before unions were formed to check the absolutism of the top-flight executives. In Chicago, the curse of the school system is the trend toward a consolidation of authority at the top. Democracy by decree is the pattern and the mimeographed bulletin the means whereby orders are sent out. There will be no real educational renaissance in Chicago or any place else until the brains of the teachers in the classroom are tapped. In Oakland High School, California, teachers are consulted on educational policy.<sup>20</sup> The superintendent has weekly round-table meetings with his teachers. Philadelphia has a central council to aid in the formulation of educational policies. Denver, Colorado, and New Rochelle, New York, also have teachers helping in the formation of educational policy.<sup>21</sup> Sharing responsibilities with the administration makes the teachers more conscious of the educational problems of the day and encourages them to broaden their outlook. As these problems are faced, teachers recognize how dependent all educational programs are on budget allowances and tax sources. In Lincoln, Nebraska, teachers share in shaping the main provisions of the school budgets.<sup>22</sup> Many others have formulated and adopted single

salary schedules. And so group responsibility leads into the economic and social problems in the community.

Teachers actually become citizens. Sometimes as they become citizens, interested in politics and government, trade unions and co-operatives, gas rates and tax exemptions, the more conservative elements of the community become alarmed. Their boys and girls begin to ask questions, and that should not be, as the author well remembers. In 1936, his contract was temporarily held up until the community insisted on its renewal. Out of that experience grew the Ann Arbor, Michigan, policy on teaching controversial issues.<sup>23</sup> A majority of people end their formal school period on or before graduation from high school. Therefore if the majority of our pupils are ever to consider and discuss controversial issues under conditions which normally exist in the schoolroom, this must be done during the high-school period. If the above was true in 1936, it certainly is more true today. Incidentally, there is no greater contribution to a teacher's morale than the knowledge that he has the support of his principal and superintendent. Effective teaching most often occurs when administrators select able teachers, encourage their professional growth and seek to maintain conditions favorable to good teaching.

Interestingly enough, the students in the schools which broaden student activity are graduated as well-equipped readers, writers and spellers as their cousins who attend

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 330.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 340.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 341.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 307.

the more formal institutions, and infinitely better equipped to use what they have learned. However, the final marks will not be in until we know if our democratic institutions will survive the tests of today. The German youth who heiled Hitler in 1932-34 were the products of authoritarian schools, and many American teachers are also believers in discipline for its own sake. If we want democracy in the state, there is no more obvious fact than this—authoritarian teachers do more to destroy democracy than all the resolutions of a teachers' convention can build up.

There is much to be done before the democratic ideal is reached in American education. The schools described in this review were the exception, not the rule. If the goal of democracy in education and education for democracy is to be achieved, it will be accomplished by the united effort of all, through more emphasis on civic education, curriculum revision, protection of teaching personnel, public support for good education, etc. Public support for education is dependent on the attitudes of the citizens of tomorrow—the pupils of today. Indeed we teachers have the destiny of the nation in our hands. Only as we feel what a young refugee<sup>24</sup> so beautifully expressed will we be able to make America really democratic:

To me it means the right to exist as an individual in the pursuit of health and happiness under a government which

<sup>24</sup>From a prize-winning essay, "What Democracy Means to Me," submitted by a high-school student in a contest sponsored by America's Town Meeting of the Air.

protects those rights of my existence. A democracy means that if I equip myself correctly I can endeavor to act in the formation of an even better working government. A hackneyed word used with democracy is freedom—yet what infinitely deep meanings that word has for me in its attachment to democracy. I may thus suffer no curtailment of my religious belief and I may say and do what I've a mind to without interference of state unless in so doing I harm others. In short, to me a democracy means the privilege to live and to live freely.

Democracy means something so big that it can hardly be put into words. It means the freedom to speak and think and believe as we choose. It means truth; it means tolerance; it means respect for oneself and for others. It means that whether I am rich or poor, black or white, my ideas are as good as those of anybody else. It means that we have the privilege to rule ourselves and the responsibility to rule ourselves wisely. It is the most important thing we have. Democracy cannot be secured or kept secure merely by negative actions against the "enemies of democracy." It can be preserved only through positive action for the strengthening of democracy.

Democracy means to me the freedom of speech, actions, press, and religion. By freedom I mean the right to do and think as I please so long as it doesn't interfere with my fellow-man. Democracy means equality to all. No one race should receive all the benefits or more than a just share of benefits. It means equal educational, suffrage, and religious rights. Democracy is to me a privilege and not a burden. It is the sharing equally of all responsibilities and working together for the good and well-being of everyone.

## Among the New Books

THE GENESIS OF PLATO'S THOUGHT by ALBAN D. WINSPEAR. New York: The Dryden Press. 348 pages. \$3.00.

Some years ago I asked a friend who teaches philosophy if there were any study of Greek thought in relation to its socio-economic background. He said there was none and that he feared it would be some time before there would be any because scholars were timid people. They craved the security to be found in footnotes. Such a study would involve surmise and hypothesis, leaps in the dark. In short, such a study, he assured me, would be very uncongenial to Greek scholars.

But here it is. Mr. Winspear, a classical scholar, has rushed in with surmise, hypothesis and leaps in the dark and written the most challenging volume of Greek thought I have read. I am no competent judge of the accuracy or completeness of the scholarship, but it makes more sense out of Greek thought than anything else I have read. He has done the work of a pioneer. I dare say that hereafter interpretations of Plato's philosophy and of early Greek thought will feel obliged to pay their respects to this study in either praise or blame.

His thesis is somewhat as follows:

"In the last analysis any historical figure can not be isolated from the total context of ideas and forces that have gone into his making. But in the case of Plato there is an even greater need to pursue the argument back into the very beginnings of the historical period. And it is quite impossible to understand the genesis of Plato's ideas without understanding the profound change that

Greek society underwent in the post-Homeric period. It is, in brief, the change in social structure which created mercantile, progressive Greek society and laid the foundations for all the subsequent history of Europe and the West.

"The unified tribal order represented in its latest stage in the Homeric poems broke up under the influence of changing technical and economic organization; great inequalities appeared in the possession of property; there were consequent clashes of political factions, and a new form of political organization arose—the city-state. Too many of our historians have treated this period under the influence of the prejudice that all historical evolution proceeds in an unbroken series of gradual and imperceptible changes—that nature and history do nothing 'in a leap.' (*Nihil per saltum facit natura.*) In our view it is impossible to appreciate fully the development of Greek thought without understanding how thoroughgoing and revolutionary was the change that came over Greek society in this period. For most of the leading ideas of Plato make their appearance, at least in embryonic form, in the changing relations of man to his environment as shown in the transition from the tribe to the state. To this process we must devote considerable attention before we even approach Plato's philosophy."

As migratory tribes overran Greece and settled in the fertile river valleys, their tribal structure gave way before a new economy. They engaged in piracy, captured slaves, and slowly began to develop a slave-holding, land-owning gentry. This transition seems to be associated with the transition from a bronze to an iron technology which makes possible progressive improvement in agricultural methods and "an increase in the



importance of agriculture itself, contrasted with the earlier stage of pastoral and migratory life, based on the possession of flocks and herds, a condition which prevailed during the period of migration several centuries before Homer."

This shift from herding to agriculture brought with it a break up of communal holdings into individual estates. The tribal chief became a great landowner who cultivated his estates by the use of slaves captured in the wars. The common man increasingly in competition with slaves began to find life more and more difficult. The old customs and mores were inadequate to the new economic relationships, and we find increasing protest. As Homer was an expression of the earlier, more triumphant phase of this movement, so Hesiod voiced the protest of the later phase.

"But in spite of the very considerable advance here recorded, the economic structure of Homeric society remained undeveloped as compared with that of classical Greece. We are still almost entirely at the stage of agricultural self-sufficiency. Nearly every case of exchange known to us in this period was, in its primary essential, barter; thing exchanged for thing, product for product. The conventional symbol that we call coined money had not yet appeared. Nor, unlike contemporary societies of the Orient, was metal used as a standard of value; long-horned oxen still served as a standard of exchange with all the inconveniences and qualitative differences that such a system entails. There is practically no hint of a currency. The one or two references to talents may be later in date and as a result of influences from the East.

"Crafts were few in number and relatively unspecialized. . . .

"In summary, then, we can see in Homeric society an example of the decay of the tribal order. The older system was destroyed by a number of factors. The development of the paternal right of inheritance made possible the accumulation of property within the family and thus gave strength to the family head over against the head of the tribe. Out of this accumulation developed the rudiments of aristocracy and monarchy. The growth of the institution of slavery, too, though embryonic and still confined to captives taken in war, will continue into a subsequent phase of development without scruple, until members of the same tribe, even of the same family become enslaved. The growth of family and individual wealth and the relative scarcity of natural as well as reproducible foodstuffs fostered pillage, plunder, and warfare, setting tribe against tribe in order to gain booty, slaves, treasures, and cattle. Already we begin to see riches being regarded as an end in themselves, as justifying any adventure and any risk, as affording an excuse for the most violent deeds. When a social organization is devised that will give absolute sanction and complete protection to the right of private and individual property, devising elaborate rules to protect a man's holding against fraud and theft and individual violence, as well as against the organized protest of the poor and dispossessed, the state will be born. The process which the Greeks called *synoikism* (literally living together) is the birth of the modern state."

In a like fashion Winspear traces the rise of the trading class and the emergence of the city-state with its democratic forms. He traces the connection between these new economic interests and the early philosophical development. The breakdown of the earlier mores in the shift from the tribal, grazing society to a land-owning, slave-holding society, and the subsequent commercial society, accompanied by contacts with other cultures through the processes of trade, necessitated critical examination of beliefs about man and nature.

The first half of the volume traces the connections between the different philosophical developments and the conflicting social and economic interests. He shows the Pythagoreans as a political party developing a reactionary dictatorship of the landowners trying to crush the democratic trading classes. Their mathematical philosophy while making real theoretical advances was at the bottom a political instrument. In a similar way Parmenides with his worship of the eternal and unchanging was a representative of the landowners attempting to discover sanctions in the eternal nature of things for the absolute power of the landowning class.

The history of the words *dike* and *themis* (right and justice) is made the central theme of his study. He traces the usage of these words from Homer to Plato. The real conflict in Greek thought as in Greek life centered about them. The concepts of change and permanence, of truth and opinion, of appearance and reality, mind and body derive their meaning in relation to these terms. For the aristocracy justice was the measure or balance in society maintained by the aristocracy.

On the other hand justice for the emerging trading class must mean something very different. While for the aristocracy, permanence characterized the universe, for these newer classes all life, all reality is found in ceaseless change. For the aristocracy justice is the maintenance of unchange. For the progressive classes, justice is relative to the culture. "Man is the measure of all things." Associated with the progressive forces we find the earlier Ionian cosmologists, Heraclitus with his doctrine of the strife of opposites and ceaseless change as at the heart of reality, the atomistic materialists, Democritus and Leucippus and the Sophists.

Thus by the time of Plato the contending social forces in Greek life had explored many avenues of interpretation. There was a considerable body of conflicting doctrine, and a great variety of unsolved problems. Plato himself was a member of the aristocracy and was closely associated with a conspiratorial counter-revolutionary clique. Moreover, Plato's interests were by no means mere abstract ivory-tower interests. They were profoundly political. He, too, finds justice the crucial problem and undertakes in his philosophy a formulation of the concept of justice and of the state that restores the aristocracy to absolute power.

He has a profound contempt for the masses, for traders and business men and for everything democratic. His is a philosophy of and for aristocracy. In a masterly fashion he picks up the threads of Greek thought which previous generations had spun and weaves them into an organic pattern—an aristocratic pattern.

This task was made the easier for him because even Athenian democracy was based upon slavery. Hence the democratic thinkers dared not push their own thought with too much vigor and consistency lest it be turned against their own interests. Thus they were caught in the middle.

Plato takes for granted existing inequalities in society and upon these posits his politics, psychology, ethics and metaphysics. Justice is to be found in the state and consists of maintaining a balance among these unequal forces. In short, justice in effect is the maintenance of the existing inequities.

It is no easy matter to fairly summarize this work. The book makes sense. For that reason it must remain a profound challenge to subsequent Greek scholarship. It is the sort of book that every student of democracy should read, for it suggests the dangers to democracy inherent in certain philosophical approaches.

Mr. Winspear throughout the book is a prosecuting attorney. This is probably appropriate for an early study of this kind in order that the hypothesis may be exploited for all it is worth. However, it gives the impression of special pleading. It may take generations of scholars exploiting and criticising this method before a measured judgment of Plato in relation to his culture is available.

I have one criticism. Mr. Winspear has in general followed a rather narrow economic interpretation. While the economic aspect of life expresses the basic biological and social needs of man, it is by no means complete. For once a cultural development has flowered from its economic stem, it in turn becomes one of the interacting factors in a situation. Each institution develops its own pattern which it tends to maintain with stubborn obstinacy. Hence in any

(Continued on page 31)

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ployees' Association, AFL.

"Dear Mr. Dykstra:

"In view of the fact that the Selective Service Act is now the law of the land, and that many employees of the University are subject to its provisions,

"And in view of the fact that it is the clearly expressed intention of the law to protect the positions of men who are subject to its provisions,

"The University Local, No. 223 of the American Federation of Teachers, respectfully requests you to enunciate a policy which will fully protect the positions and seniority of teachers and research workers of the University who may be drafted, as well as those who serve with the National Guard and Reserve Officers Corps.

"We suggest that the University administration declare its intention to restore to their positions at the end of a year of service all men who obey the call of their country. We suggest further that the year of service should be regarded as counting fully towards all seniority rights for promotion and retirement, but without impairment of probationary opportunities (e. g., in the case of instructors), and we feel that it would be useful if the administration should urge a similar policy on all departments of the University, so that a uniform approach to the problem may eventuate throughout the institution.

"We suggest also that the Regents negotiate with the appropriate authorities, in order to ensure that the state's contribution toward the retirement pension, as well as the contribution of the individual involved, may continue to be paid while the University employee is in military service."

\* \* \*

**224** CHICAGO, ILL.—"When all municipal employees who are interested in preserving their present annuity and benefit rights are organized, there need be no fear of unpleasant federal or state legislation." This was the advice Mr. George F. Mulligan, Assistant Corporation Counsel of Chicago, gave to the Educational Secretaries Union, Local 224, at its November meeting when the question of the Social Security Act was discussed.

On December 9, 400 members and guests were present at the sixth annual dinner when the Local's platform of 100 per cent Union membership and restoration of basic salary was stressed. This dinner was one of the highlights in the annual membership drive and was instrumental in bringing many new members into Local 224.

**563** BIRMINGHAM, ALA.—Local 563 was especially honored to have Dr. George Counts as its guest on November 28. He met with the executive committee and gave counsel and encouragement. Later he spoke at an open meeting to all members and any outsiders who cared to attend.

For the third year now, the Birmingham schools are faced with the fact that they must close short of a nine-month term. Business in the city is booming. The mills are running at top speed, stores are full of busy shoppers, thousands of automobiles crowd the streets and parking space is almost non-existent—yet there is a shortage of over \$127,000 in the school budget. For political and other reasons, the ad valorem tax, from which the schools get the major part of their funds, has been reduced until it is impossible for the Birmingham School Board to carry on business as it should.

\* \* \*

INDIANA COUNCIL OF TEACHERS UNIONS—The Executive Board of the Indiana Council of Teachers Unions met Saturday, November 16, in the Union Memorial Building at Purdue University. George K. Wells, chairman of the legislative committee, presented finished bills for introduction at the 1941 session of the Indiana legislature. These were reviewed and accepted by the Board.

One new bill was prepared. This bill provides for the return to teaching of those who enter the military service. It stipulates that they shall receive all salary increments that may have been granted during their absence, and it calls for the counting of military service for credit on the state retirement plan.

\* \* \*

CALIFORNIA STATE FEDERATION OF TEACHERS—The Friday evening session of the annual convention of the California State Federation of Teachers held over the Thanksgiving weekend was devoted to discussion of "Education and National Defense." Dr. Ralph Fields, School of Education, Stanford University, was the main speaker and stressed the importance of facing facts if we are to defend "Our Educational Ramparts" in a time of crisis.

New officers of the Federation were elected Saturday afternoon: president, Joel V. Berreman, Stanford University, Local 442, Palo Alto; vice-president, Gerald Strang, Local 456, Long Beach; secretary, Grace Young, Local 61, San Francisco; treasurer (re-elected), D'Aton Myers, Local 610, Glendale.

As in the national convention last summer, there was constant emphasis

on closer and more active co-operation between the American Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of Labor, especially upon matters of organizational plans.

A sound film, prepared by the American Federation of Teachers, and graphically showing what has been done in the field of "Federal Aid to Education," was shown at the banquet on Friday evening. It may be made available to other unions interested in this matter.

\* \* \*

**1** CHICAGO, ILL.—On February 9, 1940, the House of Representatives of the Chicago Teachers Union adopted the report of the Legislative Committee recommending a change in the 1917 school law in regard to the Board of Examiners. Since that time a widespread discussion of the issue in many quarters of the city has resulted in concrete support for the issue. The proposal is now being drafted for introduction into the 1941 session of the Illinois legislature.

The present Board of Examiners for Chicago school positions is made up of three members—the superintendent of schools and two others whom he appoints for two-year terms. These three conduct written and oral examinations and make up all lists. For certain promotions, there are no examinations. From the superintendent's office appointments are made from these lists. The proposed change is the creation of a board of examiners of five entirely separate from the superintendent's office, with tenure. The co-operation of the universities in the area is to be asked in order to provide the examination to select the board of examiners itself. The board of examiners shall set standards for promotions, as well as for original entry into the system.

The Chicago Board of Education countered the proposal with a surprise move on December 11 by asking the universities to provide a board to give the oral examinations, while all other matters regarding examinations remain in the hands of the superintendent. This seems to be an admission that the public outcry against the oral examinations given to candidates for the principalship in 1936 was justified. In this oral examination, no one who had opposed the policies of the Board of Education was passed, no matter how high the written grade or how wide the experience of the applicant. However, there are suspicions of irregularity on many other matters in regard to the entry of teachers and the promotion of principals. Among other things, 750 temporary certificates have been granted, most of them with no excuse but political expediency.



(Continued from page 29)

period we find the various parts of the culture in organic interaction with one another. True, the economic aspects of life exert profound influence upon the rest of the culture, but it is by no means a simple one-way affair. The tragedy, it seems to me, lies in the fact that the inertia of other institutions prevents a rational accommodation to changing economic conditions. If men but acted rationally in terms of economic interest this would be a much simpler and perhaps much less brutal world.

Hence, it perhaps follows that no interpretation of any period or character will ever be final. The various threads of influence are too complexly interwoven to readily assess their relative influences in any situation. It seems to me the volume would have been stronger had it recognized other strands of influence. Greek arts and letters were no doubt largely an expression of economic aspects of ancient Greek life. But they expressed much more. And in turn they too became a significant factor influencing subsequent Greek life and thought.

However, I do not wish to be picayune. This is a splendid work as it is and should be on the shelves of anyone who is interested in the origins of modern thought or the relations of economics to general ideas. It is particularly important to those of us who try to see the connection between democracy and philosophical concepts.

GEORGE E. AXTELLE



**EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY IN OUR TIME**, by **JESSE H. NEWLON**. New York: McGraw-Hill. 242 pages. \$2.50.

The relation of democracy to education has been discussed so often and so tritely that any new book dealing with it is likely to be approached with justifiable skepticism.

Mr. Newlon's is not to be compared, however, with the average discourse on this subject. Not only is it clearly written, forthright, and vigorous, but it is based upon seasoned acquaintance with seminal literature in politics, economics, philosophy, as well as in education.

This is not, of course, to suggest that Mr. Newlon succeeds in answering satisfactorily all the questions he raises. His distinction, for example, between federal support of education, which he approves, and federal control, which he opposes, would need much fuller discussion before it were wholly convincing. Again, his admission of the existence of classes, on the one hand, and his opposition to class techniques of political action, on the other, is likewise a distinction which raises numerous difficulties.

But the impression we wish to leave in this limited notice is distinctly a positive one. In a relatively small number of pages, he discusses such fundamental issues as the contradiction between our individualistic pecuniary practices and associational industrial processes; he proposes a realistic realignment of social groups to bring about an economic and social democracy not merely in theory but in fact; he supports the strong organization of teachers dedicated to such a democracy; he advocates a thorough reorganization of American schools with the problems of social living the pivot of their curricula.

Mr. Newlon has written the best book of the past year on this much belabored but crucial theme.

THEODORE BRAMELD

In order that the AMERICAN TEACHER may serve as a medium for the discussion of the educational problems of today, the contributors are not necessarily expressing the policies of the American Federation of Teachers.

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